00059637

NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.

THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY
Town Hall, Bombay.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 June, 2016

FIRST TRUTHS.

FROM THE FRENCH OF

PERE *BUFFIER.*

FIRST TRUTHS,

AND THE

ORIGIN OF OUR OPINIONS,

EXPLAINED:

B1799

WITH

AN ENQUIRY

Into the Sentiments of

MODERN PHILOSOPHERS,

Relative to our primary Ideas of Things.

59637

TRANSLATED FROM

The FRENCH of Pere *BUFFIER*.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A Detection of the Plagiariſm, Concealment, and Ingratitude of the Doctors REID, BEATTIE, and OSWALD.

Fe 12

Render unto Cæſar the Things which are Cæſar's.

LONDON:

Printed for J. JOHNSON, N°. 72, *St. Paul's Church-Yard.*

M, DCC, LXXX.

1780

00059637

PREFACE.

THAT human affairs are ſubject to a variety of revolutions, is an obſervation as long acknowledged, and as well founded, as any in the records of Literature; and this hath naturally ariſen from the progreſſion of ſublunary tranſactions, and the inequality of thoſe individuals who have conducted them. But that Philoſophy, at once the parent and progeny of Truth, according to the general acceptation of the word, ſhould have been the ſubject of eternal changing, would ſeem extraordinary and unnatural, were it not evinced by that fate which hath invariably attended every ſyſtem that has hitherto appeared.

Truth hath been the oſtenſible object of purſuit by all of the numerous ſects that have exiſted amongſt mankind. Each hath profeſſed to be animated by no other motive, and to ſeek no other end; and all have aſſerted their attainment of it reſpecting themſelves, although at the ſame time

they have denied it to all others. The doctrines of *Ariſtotle* and his followers, for ages, were received and propagated, as truths irrefragable, by the learned and philoſophic, through all the ſchools of *Europe*. *Des Cartes* aroſe, and laid the foundation of a new ſyſtem, in which he was followed by *Malebranche* in *France*. *Hobbes*, in his Treatiſes on Human Nature, and on Man, and *Locke*, in his Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding, the latter of whom was greatly and unconfeſſedly indebted to the former, extended the regions of this new philoſophy, when *Ariſtotle* and his diſciples ſeemed to be driven from the field, and truth was then ſuppoſed to be firmly eſtabliſhed. At length a Man, the greatneſs and excentricity of whoſe genius exceeded that of the preceding ſages, came forth, and attacked the ſyſtems of all his predeceſſors in philoſophic reſearches: he even attempted to annihilate the very exiſtence of matter, and to reduce all thoſe objects that had been hitherto conſidered as ſubſtantial beings, to mere ideas; every thing external was proſcribed, and all nature crouded within the brain of every individual.

At length the fallacy, at leaſt the imperfection, of theſe ſyſtems of modern philoſophy, began to be deſcried; and amongſt thoſe who have diſcovered the fallibility of them, no man has ſo ſignally and ſo juſtly diſtinguiſhed himſelf as Father

ther *Buffier*, a character well known and greatly eſteemed, among the learned Jeſuits, for a variety of literary productions. Of theſe, his Firſt Principles of Truth deſervedly obtained the place of pre-eminence. It was his opinion, that not only the ancient, but even the modern philoſophers above-named, have involved the ſubject of their enquiries in ſuch abſtruſeneſs and difficulties, as demand too much reflexion to be underſtood by men of ordinary capacities. For this reaſon, he has endeavoured "to know truths in "their very ſource; to analyſe thoſe to which we "muſt aſcend, in order to aſcertain whatever "is neceſſary to be proved, and which conſtitute "the utmoſt boundary of human enquiry; to de-"duce principles capable of diſpelling the miſt of "vulgar prejudice, the perplexities of the ſchools, "and the prepoſſeſſions even of certain learned "and modiſh philoſophers;" and to found the primary truths on Common Senſe, of which the ſubſequent is the definition. "Common ſenſe "is that quality or diſpoſition which nature has "placed in all men, or evidently in the far "greater number of them, in order to enable "them all, when they have arrived at the age "and uſe of reaſon, to form a common and "uniform judgement, with reſpect to objects "different from the internal ſentiment of their

" own perception, and which judgement is not " the conſequence of any interior principle."

From the preceding definition, it is evident that this learned writer conſiders Common Senſe, not like thoſe ſenſes of ſeeing, hearing, taſting, ſmelling, and touching, which perceive their objects by intuitive diſcernment; but as a quality or diſpoſition of the mind, reſulting from age and time, by which men experimentally arrive at the uſe of reaſon, and from meditation attain an ability of forming a common and uniform judgement, with reſpect to objects that are different from the internal ſentiment, which evinces that they themſelves exiſt, and that " theſe firſt " truths are propoſitions ſo clear and obvious, " that they can neither be proved nor refuted " by other propoſitions," becauſe there are none to be adduced which are more perſpicuous.

That this explanation coincides with the ideas of this celebrated writer, reſpecting common ſenſe, is manifeſt from the examples he adduces, to ſignify his meaning: ſuch as, " there is ſome- " thing in other beings that is called truth, wiſ- " dom, prudence; and, this ſomething is not " merely arbitrary." The diſcovery of theſe attributes, as exiſting in other men, is impoſſible to take place in the mind of any being which does not reflect on the ſentiments, emotions, and actions of others; compare them with thoſe of himſelf,

himſelf, examine the nature of the things themſelves, and thence infer that they are the conſequence of thinking juſtly, and acting rightly, which conſtitute the nature of truth, wiſdom, and prudence, in the proceedings of mankind. Every example he brings, clearly evinces that thoſe firſt truths, which are the objects of common ſenſe, require experience and meditation to be conceived; and that the judgements thence derived are the reſult of exerciſing reaſon. In fact, what he underſtands by common ſenſe and its perceptions, are evidently the ſame with that of common underſtanding, and its powers of diſcerning and of judging, which is given to almoſt all mankind; in contradiſtinction to that ſuperior degree of reaſon, which is ſuppoſed to exiſt in ſuch alone as exert it in the contemplation of objects abſtruſe, metaphyſical, or remote from the general comprehenſion of mankind; and to that degree of imbecillity which precludes the capacity of examining things with due conſideration. To this common ſenſe, or common underſtanding, he appeals through all his treatiſe; and in all the inſtances which he adduces, he appears to have fairly and fully receded to ſuch principles of truth as may deſervedly be conſidered as primary, and which are adequate to all the purpoſes of that conviction which he derives from

them, and within the reach of ſuch common intellects.

That the productions of men eminent in learning and ſcience, were intended for the inſtruction of ſubſequent writers, who might bend their minds to the ſtudy of ſimilar ſubjects, is what cannot be well called in queſtion; and therefore thoſe who ſucceed the former have a juſt right to the uſe of thoſe diſcoveries which the preceding have produced, provided always they gratefully acknowledge from what ſource they have derived or improved their publications. But to come forth as authors, on the merits of other men, and to conceal the obligation, is not only a flagitious theft, and an injury to the dead, but an inſult alſo on the underſtandings of the living.

Of later years the *Tranſtweedian* regions have ſwarmed with a new ſpecies of men, different from their itinerant pedlars in the wares they ſell, but ſimilar in the manner of packing them together from the labours of others: theſe are Writers, or rather Book-makers, "who obtain but "a mediocrity of knowledge between learning "and ignorance;" for ſuch is the opinion of an author, whoſe abilities to judge, and whoſe candour in deciſion, deſervedly place him above the ſuſpicion of being inadequate or unjuſt in the ſentence he has pronounced.

Not-

Notwithſtanding this firſt truth, and that genius is not a flower which bloſſoms in that hyperborean country, they are nevertheleſs as ambitious of literary diſtinction—as ſelf-ſufficient, arrogant, and contemptuous, as if learning and ſuperior intellect were given to them alone—and as ungrateful as if their productions were unſtolen, and of their own creation. They perſevere in collecting materials from other authors, and, induſtrious to conceal their plagiariſms, compile and aſſume them as their own. By the ambition of being ranked among the learned of *Europe*, they are urged to ſearch after ſubjects on which to employ their pens; by their ſelf-ſufficiency they are prompted to deem themſelves equal to the moſt arduous undertakings in literature, and from thence their arrogance ariſes—By the mediocrity of their talents and acquirements, they are incapacitated from penetrating to the genuine conceptions of the authors which they read: at the ſame time being converſant, in their own country only, with men of leſs, or not of greater, intellects and learning than themſelves, they are not encountered by thoſe checks which reſult from the converſation of ſuch men of ſuperior powers and attainments as are to be found in the more enlightened regions of *Europe*; whilſt the affectation of refining on the diſcoveries and ſentiments of other writers, runs them

either into puerilities and abſurdities, and into diſtinctions which afford no difference; or they form an envelope of words, which contains no preciſion nor arrangement of ideas, and effectually evinces, to thoſe who will ſtudy them with attention, that they neither underſtand the authors they have quoted, nor themſelves.

From an union of all theſe circumſtances, they are naturally contemptuous, becauſe they are ignorant of that which has been long known by men who are truely learned.

The author which I have tranſlated will afford a ſignal example of the preceding truths; for, among the Scottiſh writers, there are thoſe who in different degrees have clandeſtinely taken the principles and opinions of Pere *Buffier*, converted them to their own purpoſes of acquiring fame, and concealed the theft by ungratefully unacknowledging the perſon to whom they are obliged; and have ſpoiled, as far as they had abilities, his philoſophy, either by not underſtanding what it contains, or by affecting a definition of common ſenſe equally diſtant from that of this learned writer, and from truth itſelf.

Of theſe, Dr. *Reid*, Profeſſor of Moral Philoſophy in the Univerſity of *Glaſgow*, is the foremoſt; for the title of his publication is, An Enquiry into the Human Mind, on the Principles of Common Senſe. Like Pere *Buffier*, he has attempted

attempted to ſhew the fallacies of *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, and *Berkley*, as philoſophers: to theſe he has added *David Hume*, whom he has connected with *Berkley*, and ſays, "the preſent "age, he apprehends, has not produced two "more acute or more practiſed in this part of "philoſophy"; and then, in the ſubſequent page, as a proof of this acuteneſs in *Hume*, he proceeds upon the ſame principles with *Berkley*, and carries them to their full length. He ſtole his principles from the Biſhop then, without acknowledgement. But it ſeems, "as the Biſhop undid "the whole material world, this author, upon "the ſame grounds, undoes the world of ſpi-"rits, and leaves nothing in nature but ideas and "impreſſions, without any ſubject on which they "may be impreſſed." He muſt be an acute and well-practiſed philoſopher indeed, who has undone the world of ſpirits, and ſuppoſed the exiſtence of ideas *without a mind to contain* them, and left *impreſſions to be made upon nothing at all:* but being a Scotchman, like Dr. *Reid*, according to the Scottiſh doctrine of national partiality, though erroneous and unintelligible, he is ſtill to be deemed acute and well-practiſed in philoſophy; and thus the Profeſſor, fancying that he has evinced the fallacy of *Hume*, has gratified the two ſtrongeſt paſſions in the boſoms of the *Transtweedian* writers; the vanity which ſponta-

neouſly

neouſly ſprings from their native ſelf-ſufficiency, and viſionary refinements on authors whom they do not underſtand, together with that uniform prevalence proceeding from national partiality.

Hume is indeed a Metaphyſician of ſuch ſubtilty, at leaſt, that his *own* conceptions appear to have eſcaped the intelligence of himſelf. I have frequently analyſed a multiplicity of his ſentences, paragraphs, and pages: I have aſſiduouſly endeavoured to affix the propereſt idea to each word, and to conſider the whole in all the points of view within my power; and yet without a poſſibility of comprehending his intention. Diffident of my own abilities, I have conſulted men of diſtinguiſhed eminence in metaphyſical learning: theſe alſo have united in the previous concluſions. Of this fact I can adduce innumerable inſtances, that through his Eſſays, together with his uſual unintelligibility, he has not only been guilty of introducing opinions which have no other tendency than that of levelling all diſtinction between virtue and vice, and of exterminating that ſupreme felicity which neceſſarily reſults from the exerciſe of religion and morality; but that he abounds with more flagrant ſelf-contradictions than can be found in any writer whom I have read; for ſuch is the truth, that men not only acquire reputation in metaphyſical literature by the very means which would inevitably preclude it in

all

all others, but they are more ſecure from the detection of that criticiſm which is generally within the reach of common underſtandings.

Metaphyſical reſearches in their nature include a difficulty of being comprehended: the readers, therefore, of ſuch productions, whenever they encounter a paſſage unintelligible in itſelf, are inclined to ſuppoſe it to have ſprung from the abſtruſeneſs of the matter, and kindly impute to an inſufficiency in themſelves, the want of comprehending that which the author himſelf had never conceived with any degree of ideal preciſion, nor expreſſed with intelligible perſpicuity; and thus the latter acquires the reputation of being extremely refined, and deep in the knowledge of his ſubject, and beyond his reader's reach of thought, when, in fact, he was only truely incomprehenſible, and not to be fathomed either by himſelf or even the moſt extenſive line of the human intellect.

Dr. *Reid*, in his Enquiry, has carefully avoided *literally* tranſcribing the paſſages relative to *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, and *Berkley*, and the obſervations on them, which are to be found in *Buffier*; but he has with no leſs care adopted his ſenſe, and modeſtly aſſumed it as his own. He has conſidered the writings and philoſophy of that great man as *treaſure trouvé*, and abſtained from

from delivering it to the perſon to whom it lawfully belongs.

In like manner, although he has told us in his title-page, that his enquiry is founded on the principles of common ſenſe, yet has he in no part of it condeſcended to tell us in what theſe principles itſelf, and even common ſenſe, conſiſt; and whoever will attentively conſider his work, and compare it with that of Pere *Buffier*, will certainly find that *Reid* has the greateſt obligations to the learned Jeſuit; that he has exerted much art in concealing what he has ſtolen, and afforded no ſatisfactory, nor even any explanation of his ideas, concerning the principles of common ſenſe. If his conception of common ſenſe be any where to be found, it ſeems moſt probably to be in the ſubſequent paſſage, pag. 208 and 209.

"The ſenſations of touching, of ſeeing, and "hearing, are all in the mind, and can have no "exiſtence but when they are perceived. How "do they all conſtantly and invariably ſuggeſt "the conception and belief of external objects, "which exiſt whether they are perceived or not? "No philoſopher can give any other anſwer to "this, but that ſuch is the conſtitution of our "nature. How do we know that the object of "feeling is at the finger's end, and no where elſe; "that the object of ſight is in ſuch a direction "from the eye, and no other, but may be at any "diſtance;

"diſtance; that the object of hearing may be at "any diſtance, and in any direction? Not by "cuſtom, ſurely; not by reaſoning, or comparing "ideas; but by the conſtitution of our nature, &c." What paſſage can well appear to be more deſtitute of common ſenſe than the preceding, which is included in an enquiry ſaid to be founded on the principles of common ſenſe? For, according to this writer, it ſeems that reaſoning, and comparing ideas, form *no part* of the conſtitution of our nature: and yet it is impracticable to aſſign any other cauſes, that the objects of touch, eye-ſight, hearing, &c. have any diſtinction of place, or difference in diſtance, perceiveable by theſe ſenſes, but by the cuſtom of reaſoning upon, and comparing thoſe degrees of force, from the ſlighteſt to the moſt powerful, in the reſpective objects of each ſenſe. For, do we not know that an object is touched by the fingers *alone*, becauſe, by comparing its affecting thoſe, and no other parts of the body, we diſcern it is felt by them alone? By the cuſtom of hearing all degrees of ſound, from the leaſt to the greateſt; of beholding objects, from the ſlighteſt degrees of viſible perception to the ſtrongeſt; and, from the cuſtom of comparing the differences which ariſe in them to the eye and ear, as we either approach or recede from each, we obtain the idea of diſtance: and, by reaſoning upon them, do we not acquire

the

the knowledge of deciding at what diſtances they reſpectively are? Is not the idea of ſpace, in fact, obtained by the powers of loco-motion habitually exerciſed? For, were a man to remain with all his ſenſes immoveable in the ſame place, from his birth to this minute, could he poſſibly acquire that idea? For, without the *cuſtom* of moving over the ſurface of the earth, without reaſoning, and comparing the objects as they varied to the ſenſes, by proximity or receſs, neither the eye, ear, fingers, noſe, nor palate, could have conveyed an idea of diſtance to the mind.

But what explanation of the preceding circumſtances, reſpecting the ſenſes and their objects, can there be imparted by ſaying the latter are perceived, becauſe "ſuch is the conſtitution of "our nature?" What does it imply more, than that, being conſtituted men by nature, we ſee, hear, ſmell, taſte, and touch, as men? Words which are abſolutely inexplanatory of any means or effects. And what is the denying that the knowledge of direction and diſtance are not attained either by cuſtom, reaſoning, or comparing our ideas, ſo well known, and ſo demonſtratively aſcertained, leſs than an egregious ignorance of the ſubject on which he preſumes to treat? In fact, the preceding enquiry affords us a juſt and conſpicuous exhibition of the *Scottiſh* manner of philoſophiſing; and the paſſage on which

which it has been animadverted, is a fair ſpecimen of all that is truely their own, of thoſe Northern Book-makers. Whatever is to be found of genuine merit, real learning, and ſuperior intellect, in their literary manufactures, is generally purloined and unacknowledged. Words which envelope a confuſion of ideas, or that are unimparting any form, the ſole part that can be fairly attributed to them. Notwithſtanding this, the kindneſs of inadequate readers, which ſuppoſes them too profound for their capacities; when, in fact, they are truely unintelligible by themſelves and all others, together with that national combination to extol the productions of their countrymen, however deficient, and to depreciate thoſe of all others, however meritorious, have fallaciouſly forced too many of their publications into ſome degree of eſtimation; among which that of Dr. *Reid* may be juſtly conſidered.

The next in order, of the three writers who are indebted to Pere *Buffier* for all that is contained of common ſenſe in their productions, is Dr. *Oſwald*, in his Appeal to Common Senſe in behalf of Religion. Dr. *Reid* has made free with *Buffier* by taking his ſenſe only, by conveying it in other terms than thoſe of a regular tranſlation, and by concealing the perſon whom he has plundered; but *Oſwald* has not only adopted the ſenſe of the French author, but rendered his ideas in a

mere

mere tranſlation, and given them as his own, without acknowledging the obligation. In like manner, although he treats of Firſt Truths, through his whole Appeal, in the ſentiments of *Buffier*, in order to conceal the writer to whom he is obliged, he has not only given a title inexpreſſive of the idea of thoſe firſt truths; but, by an unpardonable act of injuſtice to *Buffier*, of diſhonour to himſelf, and of inſult on his readers, he has given a paſſage from Mr. *Locke*, as it is adduced and anſwered by the learned *Frenchman*, and even quoted the latter as the author of it, under the title, *Remarks on Locke's Eſſay, by F. Buffier*; whereas no ſuch eſſay ever had exiſtence. The paſſage alluded to is contained in the treatiſe which I have tranſlated; and the world cannot produce a more ſignal act of conſciouſneſs in theft, than his thus adducing a quotation from a work that never had a being, and changing the title of that on which he hath committed this literary felony, in order to eſcape the ignominy of detection. It reſembles the cunning of the Welſhman, who having ſtolen a cow, in order to avoid the diſcovery, ſhould ſhe be ſeen by the right owner at the place of ſale, cut off her tail, and tied on another of a different colour; but the artifice was diſcovered, and the felon brought to condign puniſhment.

Like

Like *Reid*, *Oſwald* has compoſed his Appeal by attempting to pull down the edifices of *Des Cartes*, *Locke*, *Berkley*, *Bolingbroke*, *Hume*, and others; at leaſt to demoliſh them in ſome particular parts, and then to erect a fabric of his own, with the materials pirated from *Buffier*, and other authors, compoſed without order or architecture. In fact, his production is manifeſtly a compilation of tranſcripts from a common-place book, incongruous and deſultory; like Harlequin's jacket, made of ſcraps of various colours, ſewed together to form a garment, which does not cover the nakedneſs of the maker. It ought to be acknowledged, that Dr. *Reid* is by much the leaſt culpable of the two, and in various places hath given proofs of his ability to think for himſelf, although there appear but few paſſages which merit the diſtinction of originality.

Oſwald, by what can be gathered from his Appeal to Common Senſe, either did not underſtand, or has intentionally rejected, the idea of it which Father *Buffier* has adopted. The learned Jeſuit conſiders common ſenſe to be that judgement, which the generality of mankind are capable of obtaining by age, and the uſe of reaſon. Now it is beyond diſpute, that the *uſe* of reaſon is *reaſoning*; and that *judgement* is the concluſion which is drawn by men who exerciſe their reaſon. Common ſenſe, then, is that degree of underſtanding

derſtanding in all things, to which the generality of mankind are capable of attaining by the exertion of their rational faculty.

Oſwald hath choſen "to found the belief of "primary truths upon the authority of that ſim-"ple perception and judgement of the rational "mind, which Mr. *Locke* had overlooked in "framing his hypotheſis." The judgement of a rational mind, upon ſimple perceptions, muſt inevitably be the concluſions of reaſoning on thoſe ſimple perceptions; or the term *rational* conveys no idea, and the perceptions and judgements on them muſt be the ſame thing, although the ſecond is neceſſarily a mental operation on the firſt: this judgement, therefore, is an act of reaſoning; and this is what Mr. *Locke* agrees in.

Pere *Buffier* has made his common ſenſe, as it has been already obſerved, to be that degree of intelligence which men in general attain by age, and the uſe of reaſon; which is evidently this, that by time we arrive at the knowledge of an infinitude of things; and, by the uſe of reaſon, form our judgements on them: and that thoſe judgements are then juſtly to be conſidered as *firſt truths*. The inſtances which are adduced, by the learned Jeſuit, evince that this is his idea of common ſenſe. "This maxim, ſays he, that "men ought to be faithful and juſt, is held by "all men." Now it is certain, that the ideas of faith-

faithfulneſs and juſtice can by no means be attained but by the exerciſe of reaſon on the actions of men, and the relations in which they ſtand reſpecting one another. By what means can faithfulneſs be known, before there has been either breach of truſt, or of duty; or juſtice be conceived, before acts of violation and injury have been committed? And do not the ideas of faithfulneſs and juſtice ſpring from comparing the conduct of mankind, reſpecting thoſe rights which they obtain from nature, and from thence inferring, by ratiocination, that difference in things which conſtitutes faithfulneſs and treachery, juſtice and injuſtice? Hence does it not evidently appear, according to *Buffier*, that, by reaſoning on what we perceive, we arrive at ſuch *firſt truths*, as are attainable by that degree of underſtanding, which is common to mankind who uſe their reaſon?

Oſwald ſeems to conceive common ſenſe to be a faculty diſtinct from reaſon, and not that degree of it which men of common capacities, by the exerciſe of reaſoning, may eaſily acquire; and that the truth or reality of its objects are as *intuitively* diſcerned as thoſe of colour, ſound, flavour, hardneſs, odour, by the reſpective ſenſes of which they are the objects; for, in page 71, he ſays: "In truth, if we have no original ideas "of religion and virtue, and all our knowledge

" of this kind muſt be gathered from abſtractions,
" made by ourſelves, ſuch knowledge muſt needs
" be precarious." But are not our ideas of virtue acquired by the ſame means of reaſoning on our perceptions and actions, as thoſe of faithfulneſs and juſtice, and conſiſt of abſtractions drawn from our obſervations on the conduct of individuals, and thence forming a complex idea of virtue abſolutely detached from all particulars and perſonalities, and then acquieſced in, as truths, by that degree of underſtanding which the learned Jeſuit diſtinguiſhes by the appellation of Common ſenſe? And, although we are poſſeſſed of original ideas of religion, in conſequence of the operation and energy of its doctrines and tenets, by the immediate perception of the faculty of faith, yet certainly no ſuch ideas are attainable by common ſenſe, without the exertion of reaſon: for the objects of faith are no more the objects of *common ſenſe*, than they are of the *ſenſe* of ſeeing.

Again, page 191, he ſays: " Along with the
" perception of hard, ſmooth, hot, cold, which
" we have by the ſenſe of feeling, we get, and
" cannot avoid, the idea of ſomething which is
" hot, cold, rough, or ſmooth; which ſomething,
" being no object of ſenſe, does not enter into
" the minds of ideots, and the lower animals."
That men in their ſenſes ſhould conceive, that with the perceptions of hard, ſmooth, hot, cold,

cold, we ſhould get the idea of ſomething that is hot, cold, rough, or ſmooth, is certainly true, becauſe theſe perceptions and ideas are one and the ſame: but that the ideas of cold, hot, rough, or ſmooth, ſhould be ſomething different from the perception of them, which is no object of ſenſe, ſeems incapable of entrance into the mind of any but an ideot, or an inferior animal. The mind, indeed, in all theſe inſtances, from a multiplicity of experience on feeling objects poſſeſſed of the preceding properties, does, by abſtraction, form an idea of hot, cold, hard, ſmooth, &c. independent of any ſpecific object; but this is not an immediate perception by a faculty denominated Common ſenſe, but one ariſing from the reflection of reaſon.

Again, he ſays, page 192, "By the external "organ of ſight we have the ſame perception of "bodies in motion, which ideots, and the lower "animals have; but, by the intellectual ſight, "we apprehend motion itſelf, which ideots and "the lower animals do not. Six billiard-balls "being placed in a line, we ſee not only the "impulſe given to the firſt, and the motion per-"formed by the laſt; but we clearly perceive the "communication of motion from the firſt to the "laſt, and ſee, in a manner, motion run through "the whole." Now I would gladly know whether the impulſe and communication of all this

motion are not ideas peceived by the organs of bodily ſight, abſolutely without the interference of an *intellectual ſight:* or whether motion can be poſſibly conceived by any other means than by the organs of ſenſe? All that can be intellectually obtained concerning the perceptions of motion, is an abſtract idea of motion, derived from the perception of all degrees and modes of motion. Is it not therefore clear, from the preceding paſſages, that this Writer has been talking of that to which he has affixed no preciſion of idea; and, if he be deemed a deep philoſopher in the opinion of others, that it is becauſe he is unintelligible to himſelf?

In page 194, Dr. *Oſwald* tells us, "there are "two orders of claſſes of perception: thoſe, to "wit, we have in common with other animals, "and which we ſhall call *animal perceptions*; and "thoſe peculiar to the rational kind, which ſhall "be called *rational perceptions.*" From the ſubſequent, and innumerable paſſages, it appears that, by the animal perceptions, he means thoſe which are acquired by the ſenſes of ſeeing, taſting, ſmelling, &c. and by *rational perceptions*, "things conveyed to the mind, by the help of "ſenſible objects, and which reſult from a due "attention to them; but, not being themſelves "the objects of ſenſe, they do not fall within the "ſphere of ideots and lower animals, are objects

"only

" only of the rational mind; and therefore the " ideas we have of them are fitly called *rational* " *perceptions.*"

To the preceding he adds: " One cannot have " the idea of motion without once and again " attending to bodies in motion; nor can you " have an idea of ſelf-determination, without be- " ing well acquainted with the motions performed " by animals; nor of the eſſential difference be- " tween virtue and vice, without underſtanding " and entering into the views and motives of the " agent." All theſe, and a multiplicity of other inſtances which he has adduced, incontrovertibly prove that theſe *rational perceptions* are neither different, nor any thing more than thoſe ideas obtained by the uſe of reaſon, and that judgement which is derived from it by age; and whatever this Writer may aſſert, there is no diſtinction in them, either real, important, or worthy the attention of any one of thoſe who look into the human mind. From every inſtance it is evident, that every perception, which he denominates real to common ſenſe, is nothing but that which all mankind have hitherto conceived to be the reſult of reaſoning on the objects which are offered to the mind, and concluſions thence derived, which are within the reach of the generality of men who ſhall exert the energy of a common underſtanding. In fact, this Writer ſeems to

have imagined that new names, applied to old ideas, bequeath a new manner of thinking; although he has not added a perception to the liſt which has been known for ages, nor a new mode of thinking to that which has been long exerciſed: at the ſame time it is evident, that his inſtances are either ſelf-contradictory, or inconſiſtent with his notion of common ſenſe; that he errs egregiouſly, if he ſuppoſes that he has held out new lights and new truths to mankind; and is unpardonable in his endeavours to conceal the name of that Author to whom he is ſo ſignally obliged for all that approaches to the merit of common ſenſe.

Having thus examined, in a ſuccinct and curſory manner, what has been advanced by *Reid* and *Oſwald*, on the preceding ſubject, and ſufficiently ſhewn their plagiariſms from Pere *Buffier*, and their ingratitude in concealing their obligations to him; I now proceed to Dr. *Beatie's Eſſay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, in Oppoſition to Sophiſtry and Scepticiſm.*

This *Transtweedian* Writer has, in like manner, pillaged from the treaſures of the learned Jeſuit all that contains the leaſt degree of merit through his whole production; and he has only mentioned his name, in a note, among thoſe who have written on the ſubject of common ſenſe. It has been already evinced, that the idea of Pere *Buffier*, reſpecting common ſenſe, is—that it is that degree of

of judgement, which by time, and the uſe of reaſon, is attainable by the generality of mankind; or, which is preciſely the ſame, that degree of reaſon which is common to thoſe who may exert it on the various ſubjects that are brought before the mind.

But *Beatie*, willing to refine on what he reads, or not perfectly underſtanding it, has made reaſon one faculty of the mind, and common ſenſe another; and inculcated, that the truth of all the objects of the latter is as intuitively diſcerned by his *common* ſenſe, as that of the objects of the corporeal ſenſes, the eye, ear, palate, noſe, and fingers, which are reſpectively adapted to the perception of them.

In imitation of his countrymen, *Reid* and *Oſwald*, he alſo has examined, after Pere *Buffier*, what has been advanced by *Des Cartes*, *Malbranche*, *Locke*, *Berkley*, and *Hume*; and indeed with juſtice expoſed the abſurdities of *Le bon David*, as he was ironically ſtyled by *John James Rouſſeau*, who, if he had diſcerned the neceſſity of an eſtabliſhed religion to confirm and perfect the civil inſtitutes of legiſlatures, as clearly as he ſaw the rights of human kind, and what ought to be the chief objects of all legiſlation, had been the moſt eminent of all authors that the world hath hitherto produced: for no man did ever perceive the truths of thoſe opinions which he has pub-

publiſhed, with more perſpicuity, or delivered them with greater preciſion; nor did any other ever expreſs them with more propriety and force, or manifeſt a greater degree of genius, and of original thinking. In fact, he is ſo conſpicuouſly ſuperior to *Voltaire*, *D'Alembert*, and all thoſe who have attacked his works, that it is evidently manifeſt, their enmity to him aroſe from a conſciouſneſs of his ſuperiority to them, and from the deſpicable envy of not being capable of hearing and confeſſing his pre-eminence.

But let me return to *Beattie*, who aſſerts, Chap. II. "that all reaſoning terminates in firſt "principles; all evidence ultimately intuitive; "common ſenſe the ſtandard of truth to man."—And this intuitive evidence he applies to mathematical reaſoning—to the evidence of external ſenſe—to the evidence of internal ſenſe or conſciouſneſs—to the evidence of memory—to reaſoning from the effect to the cauſe—to probable and experimental reaſoning—to analogical reaſoning—to faith in teſtimony.

In order to elucidate this matter with the greater accuracy, let me firſt define what is uniformly underſtood by intuition: and this is, *immediate knowledge*, or *knowledge not obtained by deduction of reaſoning, but inſtantaneouſly accompanying the ideas which are its objects*; ſuch as the knowledge of colour by the eye, of ſound by the ear,

ear, of taſte, odour, and ſoftneſs, by the other ſenſes.

Let me now enquire, whether the truth of the objects of Common Senſe, in all the preceding inſtances, be perceived in this inſtantaneous and intuitive manner, without any previous operation of the mind to effect it. It will be then diſcovered, whether this Plagiary hath underſtood the Author whom he hath ſo ungenerouſly plundered, or the idea which accompanies the terms *intuitive evidence* in the minds of all ſuch as have juſt conceptions of it.

In order to evince this truth, let us examine a few of thoſe propoſitions which he has given as proofs that common ſenſe *intuitively* perceives the truth of all the objects of the human faculties: and to this end, Dr. *Beatie* having aſſerted, "that all reaſoning terminates in firſt principles, "all evidence is ultimately intuitive, common "ſenſe the ſtandard of truth to man," propoſes, Chap. II. to treat of truth on the following heads.—1. Of mathematical reaſoning.—2. Of the evidence of external ſenſe.—3. Of the evidence of internal ſenſe, or conſciouſneſs.—4. Of the evidence of memory.—5. Of reaſoning from the effect to the cauſe.—6. Of probable, or experimental reaſoning.—7. Of analogical reaſoning.—8. Of faith in teſtimony.——Such being

ing the ſubjects of his eſſay, before I ſhall proceed to them particularly, it ſeems neceſſary to animadvert a little on the title of this Chapter I. "That all reaſoning *terminates* in firſt principles." Then muſt it be impoſſible to reaſon otherwiſe than *à poſteriori*, from the effect to the cauſe; which is contradicted by every moment's experience: the mathematician reaſons from his point, line, and ſurface; the mechanician, from elaſticity, weight, forms, and proportions, in the conſtructing of machines; the farmer, that, the ſun riſing to-morrow at ſix o'clock, he ſhall have light to proceed to his work; that his ſcythe, hook, and other inſtruments of huſbandry, being well ſharpened, will effect what is intended to be done by them: in fact, in all poſſible inſtances, whether they be ſcientific, or in the uſage of common life, men reaſon from the cauſe to the effect, from the principle to its conſequences; or experience and diſcoveries have effected nothing amongſt men, reſpecting their conduct, in all the vaſt variety of knowledge and invention. This, I believe, will be far from being acknowledged by perſons of common ſenſe; and may it not be as juſtly aſſerted, that men always walk backwards, and do not ſee to what place they are going, as that they reaſon backwards to principles which they are to diſcover?

Before

Before we proceed to a more intimate examination of this matter, I requeſt my reader to remark that definition of intuitive evidence which hath been given in the preceding page but one.

But *Beatie* aſſerts, pag. 58, "every ſtep in a "mathematical proof is ſelf-evident, or muſt "have been formerly demonſtrated; and every "demonſtration doth finally reſolve itſelf into "intuitive or ſelf-evident principle, which it is "impoſſible to prove, and equally impoſſible to "diſbelieve." Hence, according to this writer, that which is acquired by reaſoning, ſtep by ſtep, until it arrives at demonſtration, is intuitive, ſelf-evident, or knowledge not obtained by deduction of reaſoning, but inſtantaneouſly accompanying the ideas which are its objects; and thoſe demonſtrations which are formed by drawing inferences from the relations in which they are ſituated reſpecting each other, reſolve themſelves into intuitive or ſelf-evident principles, or into immediate knowledge inſtantaneouſly accompanying the ideas which are its objects. If this be admitted, then there is no difference between the perceptions which are received by the external ſenſes, and thoſe which are the effects of logical deduction, or the exerciſe of reaſon. This then is, to confound all thoſe terms and diſtinctions which have hitherto been univerſally acknowledged.

ledged to be eſſentially different, and to make that end which is diſcovered by inveſtigation and long deductions of ratiocination, to be as immediately known as that which is ſeen by the eye, and inſtantaneouſly perceived.

The laſt article of the Chapter above mentioned is, that "Common Senſe is the ſtandard "of truth to man:" and now it ſeems neceſſary to ſhew his idea of Common Senſe, pag. 39. "The term *Common Senſe* hath, in modern times, "been uſed by philoſophers, both *French* and "*Britiſh*, to ſignify that power of the mind which "perceives truth, or commands belief, not by "progreſſive argumentation, but by an inſtan-"taneous, inſtinctive, and irreſiſtible impulſe, de-"rived neither from education, nor from habit, but "from nature; acting independently on our will, "whenever its object is preſented according to an "eſtabliſhed law, and therefore not improperly "called *ſenſe*; and acting in a ſimilar manner "upon all, or at leaſt, upon a great majority of "mankind, and therefore properly called *common* "*ſenſe*. It is in this ſenſe and ſignification that "that the term *common ſenſe* is uſed in the preſent "enquiry."

Again, he ſays, page 42. "Reaſon, as im-"plying a faculty not marked by any other name, "is uſed by thoſe who are moſt accurate in diſtin-"guiſhing, to ſignify that power of the mind by

"which

" which we draw inferences, or by which we are " convinced that a relation belongs to two ideas, " on account of our having found, that thoſe ideas " bear certain relations to other ideas. In a word, " it is that faculty which enables us, from rela- " tions and ideas that are known, to inveſtigate " ſuch as are unknown, and without which we ne- " ver could proceed in the diſcovery of truth a " ſingle ſtep beyond firſt principles, or intuitive " actions: and it is in this laſt ſenſe we are to " uſe the word *reaſon* in the courſe of this en- " quiry.

Such are his diſtinctions between common ſenſe and reaſon: and page 47, he adds, " There are " few faculties, either of our mind or body, more " improveable by culture, than that of reaſoning; " whereas common ſenſe, like other inſtincts, ar- " rives at maturity with almoſt no care of ours. " To teach the art of reaſoning, or rather of wran- " gling, is eaſy; but it is impoſſible to teach com- " mon ſenſe to one who wants it."

I muſt once more beg leave to inſert the idea of Pere *Buffier* reſpecting common ſenſe, page 22: " What is here meant by common ſenſe, is that " diſpoſition or quality, which nature has placed " in all men, or evidently in the far greater num- " ber of them, in order to enable them all, when " they have arrived to the age and uſe of reaſon, " to form a common and uniform judgement with

" reſpect

" reſpect to objects different from the internal " ſentiment of their own perception, and which " judgement is not the conſequence of any anterior " principle." I ſhall now examine the inſtances which *Beatie* has adduced of the different modes of reaſoning already related: it will then be ſeen, whether theſe inſtances are more applicable to reaſon than to common ſenſe, as he has delivered them; and whether his definition, or that of Pere *Buffier*, correſpond moſt accurately with that idea which is generally conceived to belong to the term *common ſenſe*, in the inſtances which *Beatie* has afforded. Page 57, he tells us, " There " are two kinds of mathematical demonſtra- " tion: the firſt is called *direct*, and takes " place when a concluſion is inferred from pre- " miſes which render it neceſſarily true; the other " kind is called *indirect*, &c. with which I have " nothing to do in this place."

Such being his definition of mathematical demonſtration that it is a concluſion ariſing from inferences drawn from premiſes, which make it neceſſarily true, that is, by the operations of reaſon ſucceſſively exerted; it ſeems not a little ſurpriſing, that ſuch truths ſhould be perceived by *common ſenſe*, as he has deſcribed it, " a power of the " mind which perceives truth, not by progreſſive " argumentation, but by an inſtantaneous, in- " ſtinctive, and infallible impulſe." If the preceding

ceding mode of inference from premiſes to a concluſion neceſſarily true, be that of mathematical reaſoning, the truth which is thence diſcerned can in no ſenſe be ſaid to be derived from an inſtantaneous, inſtinctive, and irreſiſtible impulſe, without progreſſive argumentation. Either mathematical reaſoning is, therefore, not that which he deſcribes; or, being comprehended by inferring from premiſes to a concluſion, it cannot be the object of *Beatie*'s common ſenſe. But, in fact, his deſcription of mathematical reaſoning is true, and his definition of common ſenſe erroneous: for ſuch is the reality, that truth ariſing from mathematical reaſoning is diſcovered by the very operations of reaſon, which he deſcribes, "that power of the "human mind by which we draw inferences, or "by which we are convinced that a relation be-"longs to two ideas, on account of our having "found that theſe ideas bear certain relations to "other ideas."

Hence it is evident, that truth, in mathematical reaſoning, is the reſult of reaſon, proceeding from principles or premiſes by inference and induction, till it arrives at demonſtration; and not of the intuitive diſcernment of his *common ſenſe*, which, he aſſerts, is a different faculty from reaſon, and arrives, "like other inſtincts, at maturity, with "almoſt no care of ours."

However, although the truths reſulting from mathematical reaſoning cannot poſſibly be the effect of the inſtantaneous and inſtinctive perception of *Beatie*'s common ſenſe, it coincides exactly with that of Pere *Buffier*: "a quality which nature "hath placed in men, in order to enable them, "when they have arrived at the age and uſe of "reaſon, to form a common and uniform judg- "ment with reſpect to objects, &c."

Now this common ſenſe being acquired by age, cannot arrive to maturity, like inſtincts, with almoſt no care of ours; and being attained by the uſe of reaſon, that is, by inferring ſucceſſively from principles and premiſes to a concluſive truth, cannot be a common ſenſe that diſcerns inſtantaneouſly and inſtinctively. In the preceding manner *Beatie*, by preſuming to refine on the ideas reſpecting common ſenſe, as deſcribed by Pere *Buffier*, and by adopting another which is his own, hath deviated into a palpable abſurdity. But let me proceed to his exemplifications, that mathematical truths are inſtantaneouſly perceived. Page 59, he ſays: "but who will pretend to prove that "a whole is greater than a part, or that things "equal to one and the ſame thing are equal to "one another?" Certainly there are many who will pretend to prove the preceding axioms; and this, becauſe without proof they had never been comprehended.

Whole and *part*, *great* and *ſmall*, are abſtract ideas, derived from material ſubſtances which have been the objects of the external ſenſe of ſeeing: the eye hath ſeen the whole maſs; it hath ſeen it divided into parts; it hath thereby acquired the ideas of greater and leſs, by an operation of the mind called compariſon, between two or more things: and from thence reaſon hath inferred that the maſs, which contained the ſeveral parts, is neceſſarily greater than any of thoſe parts of which the whole was compoſed; and in this manner, the antecedent axiom hath been proved to be true by one man to another, or by the ſame man reaſoning in the preceding way. When the above axiom therefore is offered to the mind of any perſon who hath previouſly diſcerned the truth of it, by the preceding inference, it is not inſtantaneouſly diſcerned by *Beatie*'s common ſenſe, but by an inſtantaneous remembrance that it is abſolutely true.

Such being the caſe in this ſimple axiom, it is yet more evident in the ſubſequent, "That things "equal to one and the ſame thing, are equal to "one another:" for, in order to comprehend this truth, the ſenſes muſt have learned to diſtinguiſh things by numeration, as one, two, &c. and thence to form abſtract ideas of numbers. Equality is an idea obtained by the ſenſes alſo, by com-

paring two or more objects, relative to ſize, colour, ſhape, and other properties of bodies, and thereby diſcerning their agreement or diſagreement; and from thence the idea of abſolute equality is derived. It being diſcerned then, that two or more things correſpond exactly with a third, it is logically inferred, that each of the former, being equal to the third, muſt of neceſſity be equal to one another. When this axiom, therefore, is, on future occaſions, propoſed to the mind, it is, as in the former caſe, by an act of reminiſcence, and not of ſenſe, either *common* or otherwiſe, that the truth is inſtantaneouſly perceived. As to the propriety of *inſtinctive*, as applied to common ſenſe, it ſhall be animadverted on hereafter.

There is yet another mathematical truth, which this writer preſumes to be inſtantaneouſly perceived: "the three angles of a triangle are equal "to two right angles." Whoever has made the leaſt obſervation on the manner in which this propoſition is demonſtrated in Euclid, will inſtantly be convinced, that the truth of it is neither inſtantaneouſly, nor intuitively diſcerned: for, in order to evince this truth, not only a diagram, but a long ſeries of induction is inevitably requiſite: ſo that, inſtead of this truth being intuitively diſcerned by all men, it really happens, that by far the greater part of mankind are incapable

of

of exerting that application and reſearch which are neceſſary to the diſcerning of it.

I ſhall now examine what he has offered on the "evidence of external ſenſe." To believe our ſenſes, ſays he, page 64, "is therefore accord-"ing to the law of nature; and we are prompted "to this belief, not by reaſon, but by inſtinct, "or common ſenſe. I am as certain that I am at "preſent in a houſe, and not in the open air,— "that I ſee by the light of the ſun, and not by the "light of a candle,—that I feel the ground hard "under my feet, and that I lean againſt a real, "material table, as I can be of any geometrical "axiom, or of any demonſtrated concluſion."

How it ſhould come to paſs that men are not *prompted* to believe their ſenſes, as much by reaſon as *Beatie*'s common ſenſe, ſeems difficult to aſcertain, though it be eaſily aſſerted. Nay, to me it ſeems, that it is reaſon alone, or common ſenſe, as deſcribed by *Buffier*, which induces us to believe our ſenſes; for, having found by manifold experience, that our ſenſes are the faithful reporters of the objects which are placed before them, we thence infer that they ought to be believed. But in what manner *Beatie*'s common ſenſe, which "perceives truth, or commands belief, not by "progreſſive argumentation, but by an inſtanta-"neous, inſtinctive, and irreſiſtible impulſe,"

can afford a ground for believing our ſenſes, ſeems to be utterly inexplicable.

Is it not ſomewhat extraordinary that common ſenſe and inſtinct ſhould be the ſame faculty? Inſtinct is defined, by as competent a judge of our language as any this kingdom hath produced, and ſhewn to be uſed in that ſenſe, by authors of great eminence, to be deſire, or averſion, acting on the mind, without the intervention of reaſon, or deliberation, or the power that determines the will of brutes. Now, that a man, by ſuch deſire or averſion, ſhould be as certain that he is in a houſe, and not in the open air,—that he ſees by the light of the ſun, and not by the light of a candle—that he feels the ground hard under his feet, and that he leans againſt a real material table, as he can be of the truth of any geometrical axiom, ſeems to be inconceivable: for, in what manner inſtinct, which is an emotion of the mind, either towards or from the object before it, can be ſuſceptible of diſcerning truths, and ſynonymous with a common ſenſe, which inſtantaneouſly perceives the truth of things, appears to want much explanation to be comprehended. And if inſtinct and common ſenſe be the ſame power, then brutes are poſſeſſed of *Beatie*'s common ſenſe; againſt which I have nothing to object. Sir *John Falſtaff* indeed aſſerts, he knew the true prince by inſtinct: but that a man ſhould know that he was leaning on a table

table by inſtinct, was left for the diſcovery of Dr. *Beatie*. In fact, the certainty of all the preceding particulars ariſes intuitively from the evidence of the external ſenſes of ſeeing and feeling, and is neither the object of inſtinct, common ſenſe, nor belief: and from the whole of the antecedent paſſage it is manifeſt, that either this writer hath annexed no preciſe idea to the word *inſtinct*, or that he has uſed *inſtinctively* as ſynonymous with *intuitively*, through ignorance of the language in which he writes.

I ſhall now enquire whether the objects of internal ſenſe or conſciouſneſs be intuitively or inſtinctively perceived: and of theſe, *I exiſt*, is a propoſition, which he ſays, page 33, "he is conſcious "his mind readily admits, and acquieſces in." But in what manner does this conſciouſneſs ariſe from common ſenſe, when, in fact, this conſciouſneſs is nothing more than a reflection, that he thinks, and therefore that he is ſomething, or an exiſtence? By applying this mode of examination through all the inſtances adduced in his whole chapter, it will be ſeen that nothing therein is inſtantaneouſly perceived; but that all are the effects of inference and reaſoning in greater or leſs degrees.

Proceed we now to examine what he has ſaid on the evidence of memory. "We truſt," ſays he, "to the evidence of memory, becauſe we cannot "help truſting to it. The ſame providence that "endued

" endued us with memory, without any care of " ours," as if man had been concerned in making himſelf, " endued us alſo with an inſtinctive pro- " penſity to believe in it, previouſly to all rea- " ſoning and experience." It ſeems to be not perfectly eaſy to comprehend whether, by " believ- " ing in memory," he means that we remember we believe, we remember; which no man will doubt: or that, " by believing in memory," we believe all we remember, which is certainly not the caſe; for all men remember innumerable things which they do not believe. But what connection is there to be found between remembrance of things which are paſt, and the inſtantaneous perception of truth as ſoon as objects are offered to a faculty, which this writer has determined to be common ſenſe? And if Providence, as he ſays, " has endued us with an inſtinctive propen- " ſity to believe in what we remember, previouſly " to all reaſoning and experience," this gift of Providence would not appear to be the moſt eligible, ſince whoſoever ſhall, by the influence of this propenſity, be induced to believe without reaſoning and experience, muſt inevitably be led into endleſs error: and therefore, as inſtinct in all animals is an infallible guide to their well-being, I am apt to conclude, that this propenſity to believe in memory, previous to all reaſoning and experience,

rience, is not inſtinctive, nor the gift of Providence.

I ſhall now proceed to his chapter *of reaſoning from the effect to the cauſe.* This he begins, page 110, with the ſtory of a book gotten into his chamber, no body can tell how: "for, if his ſervants report be true, and if the book has not "been brought by an inviſible agent, it muſt have "come in a miraculous manner, by the interpoſition of ſome inviſible cauſe; for ſtill he muſt "repeat, that without ſome cauſe, it *could not poſſibly have come* hither:" which caſe is ſtated on *ifs* that never can happen. And then he boldly "pronounces it to be an axiom clear, certain, and "undeniable, that whatever beginneth to exiſt, proceedeth from ſome cauſe: whether this maxim be "intuitive or demonſtrable, may perhaps admit "of ſome diſpute." And perhaps not: the very title of the chapter being of reaſoning from the effect to the cauſe; that is, from a thing known, to a thing ſought for; it is paſt diſpute, that the latter cannot be inſtantaneouſly diſcerned, without progreſſive argumentation. As an inſtance of this truth, let us take what he has placed among the propoſitions in his firſt chapter, "There is "a God:" and then let us ſhew in what manner the truth of this propoſition is evinced. Whoever has ſeen an artiſt employed in making a watch, or other curious machine, and has obſerved

ſerved the effects which reſult from the application of elaſtic or heavy bodies on wheels of certain proportions, and diviſions of teeth, is convinced, from that which paſſes in his own mind, whenever he hath executed any thing with his own hands, that this artiſt was guided in all his operations by the direction of thought. Whenever therefore this perſon may, on future occaſions, behold a mechanical compoſition, he readily infers, that it muſt have been the production of a thinking being, or of man.

In like manner, when the order and beauty of the univerſe are obſerved, the marvellous formation of animate and inanimate beings, to the ends of their exiſting, the adaptation of one thing to another, for the uſe and benefit of each reſpective being, and of the whole, he analogouſly concludes, that all this is the effect of an intelligent agent; and as theſe effects are ſo infinitely ſuperior to thoſe accompliſhed by the human being, he conceives the author of them to be perfect, and attributes to him the name of God. Hence it is evident, that the truth of the propoſition, *There is a God*, can be perceived but by a ſeries of analogical reaſoning, from the effect to the cauſe; and therefore the truth of it cannot be diſcerned by *Beatie*'s common ſenſe, which comprehends intuitively, inſtantaneouſly, and inſtinctively.

The

The ſixth chapter, of *Probable or Experimental Reaſoning*, comes next in order. "In all our reaſoning, ſays he, page 120, from the cauſe to the "effect, we proceed on a ſuppoſition and a belief, "that the cauſe of nature will continue to be, "in time to come, what we experience it to "be at preſent, and remember it to have been "in time paſt. This preſumption of continuance "is the foundation of all our judgements concerning future events; and this, in many caſes, "determines our conviction as effectually as any "proof or demonſtration whatever, although the "conviction ariſing from it be different in kind "from what is produced by ſtrict demonſtration, "as well as from thoſe kinds of conviction that "attend the evidence of ſenſe, memory, and abſtract intuition:"—which is no leſs than abſtract nonſenſe, ſince no abſtract ideas can have originated but from ſome previous and ſpecific perceptions of ſenſible and particular objects, and are creatures of the mind; and therefore they cannot be intuitive, or known without ſome intermediate and antecedent perceptions.

"The higheſt degree of conviction, in reaſoning "from cauſes to effects, ſays he, is called *moral* "*certainty*; and the inferior degrees reſult from "that ſpecies of evidence which is called *proba*"*bility*, or *veriſimilitude*:—that all men will die,

"that

" that the ſun will riſe to-morrow, the ſea ebb " and flow, &c. no man can doubt, without be- " ing accounted a fool. In theſe, and all other " inſtances, where our experience of the paſt has " been equally extenſive and uniform, our judge- " ment concerning the future amounts to moral " certainty: we believe with full aſſurance, or at " leaſt without doubt, that the ſame laws of nature " which have hitherto operated, will continue to " operate, as long as we foreſee no cauſe to inter- " rupt or hinder their operation.

" But no perſon who attends to his own mind, " will ſay, that in theſe caſes our belief, or con- " viction, or aſſurance, is the effect of proof, or " of any thing like it. If reaſoning be at all em- " ployed, it is only in order to give a clear view " of our paſt experience with regard to the point " in queſtion. When this view is obtained, " reaſoning is no longer neceſſary; the mind by " its own intellectual force, and in conſequence " of an irreſiſtible and inſtinctive impulſe, infers " the future from the paſt, immediately, and with- " out the intervention of any argument."

Notwithſtanding this hardy and round aſſertion, " that no perſon who attends to his own mind will " ſay, that in theſe caſes our belief, or conviction, " or aſſurance, is the effect of proof, or of any " thing like it;" I ſhall venture to be of a very different opinion, and leave it to our readers

to

to determine whether this aſſertor, or I, have moſt attended to our own mind. In order to ſet this matter in a fair light, it ſeems requiſite to determine what are the ideas which have been conſtantly annexed to the word *proof:* and theſe are, according to the authority of Dr. *Johnſon*, founded on the uſage of authors of the moſt unqueſtionable ſkill in the *Engliſh* language, *evidence, teſtimony, convincing token, convincing argument, means of conviction.* Now let me apply this ſenſe of the word *proof* to what hath been already quoted from this author: "In all our reaſonings from the cauſe to "the effect, we proceed on a ſuppoſition and a "belief that the courſe of nature will continue to "be, in time to come, what we experience it to "be at preſent, and remember it to have been "in time paſt: this preſumption of continuance "is the foundation of all our judgements concern-"ing future events; and this, in many caſes, de-"termines our conviction as effectually as any "proof or demonſtration whatſoever. The "higheſt degree of conviction, in reaſoning from "cauſes to effects, is called *moral certainty:* that "all men will die, that the ſun will riſe to-mor-"row, &c. In theſe and all other inſtances, where "our experience of the paſt has been equally ex-"tenſive and uniform, our judgement concerning "the future amounts to moral certainty."

The

The manner in which men reaſon on the preceding ſubjects is this: — I have lived to ſee ten thouſand or any number of men to die; I have heard that all the preceding generations of men, conſiſting of millions of millions have died alſo: I have ſeen the ſun riſe ten thouſand times; I have read and heard that it has daily done the ſame for ſix thouſand years, or for two millions one hundred and ninety thouſand days: from theſe unvarying evidences, I conclude that men will continue to die, and the ſun to riſe daily. Are theſe uniform inſtances of experience no convincing token, no convincing argument, or no means of conviction? Is our belief, conviction, or aſſurance, in theſe caſes, not the effect of proof, or of any thing like it? And can there be an if—"that reaſoning is employed only to give us "a clear view of our paſt experience with regard "to the point in queſtion, and when that view is "obtained, that reaſoning is no longer neceſſary," when it is beyond contradiction, that the mind, by reaſoning, infers from the uniform death of all preceding generations, that the preſent and future will yield to the ſame fate, and from the conſtant riſing of the ſun, from the creation to this day, that it will continue to riſe on the ſubſequent? This is, indeed, what *Beatie* himſelf allows, and ſays, "the ſea has ebbed and flowed twice every "day

" day in time paſt; therefore the ſea will continue " to ebb and flow twice every day in the time to " come:" and, although this Writer, *Hume*, and *Campbell*, as he aſſerts, have ſaid the preceding " is by no means a logical deduction of a conclu- " ſion from premiſes," yet I preſume they are all miſtaken; for from the premiſes founded on the univerſal experience of all men in all ages, on what has invariably paſſed from the beginning of all things to this day, the concluſion is logically a *proof*, though not a demonſtration, that they will ſo continue to the end. For what is the meaning of the term *logic*, but the art of reaſoning? And is it no part of that art, to reaſon analogically, and from the unvaried experience of what has daily happened for two millions one hundred and ninety thouſand days, that the like will happen again to-morrow, and from which, as he allows, ariſes *moral certainty?* If he ſhould ſtill perſiſt, that the concluſion is not logical, will he alſo deny, that from the paſt to the future is an inference of conviction, ſince he has ſaid, " this pre- " ſumption of continuance is the foundation of " all our judgements concerning future events, " and determines our conviction as effectually as " any proof or demonſtration whatſoever?" Such being the ſtate of things according to himſelf, is it not extremely ſingular that he ſhould aſſert, " the mind, by its own innate force, and in conſe-

" quence

" quence of an irreſiſtible and inſtinctive impulſe,
" infers the future from the paſt, immediately,
" and without the intervention of any argument;"
when it is evidently impoſſible, that an inference
can be made without argumentation? I infer that
the ſun will riſe to-morrow, from its having riſen
daily for two millions one hundred and ninety
thouſand days; and in like manner, of the in-
ſtances of the death of man, and the flowing of
the ſea.

In fact, an *inſtinctive* force can, in no ſenſe,
have truth for its object, although an intuitive
may. The former is an impaſſioned impulſe of
deſire or averſion concerning things, and is in-
ſuſceptible of all reaſoning, and of which truth
can therefore never be the object: it may be of
the latter, which is knowledge not obtained by
deduction of reaſoning, but inſtantaneouſly. In
fact, if "the mind by its own innate force, in conſe-
" quence of an irreſiſtible and inſtinctive impulſe,
" infers the future from the paſt, immediately,
" and without the intervention of any argument;"
then can a horſe, or more ignoble brute, which
is conſtantly impelled by inſtinct, infer the future
from the paſt, as well as *James Beatie*, LL.D.

From what has been offered on this chapter, in
all the inſtances which this writer hath adduced,
is it not evident, that the truth of the reſpective
objects is not perceived, " in conſequence of an
" irreſiſtible,

"irreſiſtible and inſtinctive impulſe, which infers "the future from the paſt immediately, and, "without the intervention of any argument," but by inferences fairly deduced, according to the only manner in which truth is to be diſcovered, by probable and experimental reaſoning? And to ſuppoſe, in reaſoning on things that have been known by experiment, that the mind does not infer that future events will reſemble thoſe which have paſſed from ſimilar cauſes, or, in things likely to happen, that it does not compare the particular inſtances of thoſe which have lapſed with theſe which are preſent, and, from their diſſimilitude or likeneſs, infer the degree of probability of a ſimilar event, appears to me to be an egregious error in the knowledge of the human intellect.

In the ſubſequent chapter he treats of *Analogical Reaſoning*. "Reaſoning, ſays he, page 126, from "analogy, when traced up to its ſource, will be "found in like manner to terminate in a certain "inſtinctive propenſity, implanted in us by our "Maker, which leads us to expect that ſimilar "cauſes in ſimilar inſtances do probably produce, "or will produce, ſimilar effects. The probabi- "lity which this kind of evidence is fitted to il- "luſtrate, does, like the former, admit of a vaſt "variety of degrees, from abſolute doubting, up "to moral certainty."

It has been already ſhewn, that truth can never be the object of *inſtinct*; and the inſtances which he adduces, will incontrovertibly prove that the conſequences which happen, according to the loweſt degrees of probability, up to *moral certainty*, are neither the effects of inſtinctive, nor even of inſtantaneous, or of intuitive perception. For example: the firſt which he has brought, of "an "ancient philoſopher who was ſhipwrecked in a "ſtrange country, diſcovered certain geometrical "figures drawn upon the ſand upon the ſea-ſhore, "he was naturally led to believe, with a degree "of aſſurance not inferior to moral certainty, that "the country was inhabited by men, ſome of "whom were men of ſtudy and ſcience, like him-"ſelf. Had theſe figures been leſs regular, and "liker the appearance of chance-work, the "preſumption from analogy, of the country be-"ing inhabited, would have been weaker; and "had they been of ſuch a nature as left it altoge-"ther dubious, whether they were the works of "accident or deſign, the evidence would have "been too ambiguous to ſerve as a foundation "for any opinion."

Let us examine whether this inſtance will furniſh us with a proof, that "reaſoning from ana-"logy, when traced up to its ſource, will be "found to terminate in a certain inſtinctive pro-"penſity."

"penſity." The ſource of this philoſopher's reaſoning conſiſted in the geometrical figures which he found traced on the ſand; and as he had never ſeen ſuch figures delineated but by human beings, and theſe were too regular and exact to be the production of chance, he concluded, by comparing theſe figures on the ſand, with others made by men, that the former were the works of man alſo. This then is abſolutely a concluſion drawn by reaſoning analogouſly, from what he *had* ſeen performed, to that which he *had not*, and thence inferring, that the latter had originated from the ſame cauſe with the former. In what manner then can it with juſtice be ſaid, that this reaſoning did terminate in a certain inſtinctive propenſity? Inſtinct, it has been already ſaid, is an emotion of the ſoul, ſpringing from deſire or averſion, acting in the mind, without the intervention of reaſon or deliberation; the power which determines the will of brutes. Did this philoſopher, when he ſaw theſe figures on the ſand, neither reaſon nor deliberate on the cauſe which moſt probably might have produced them? Was not his will to believe them the works of men, determined by that vaſt degree of ſimilarity to thoſe figures which he had experimentally ſeen delineated by human hands? And if the moral certainty, that theſe figures had been the production of a human being, aroſe from an inſtinctive propenſity to be-

lieve it, what reaſon can be adduced, that the long-eared quadruped, which is directed ſolely by inſtinct, would not, from ſeeing the like figures on ſand, conclude that they were the operations of men?

In fact, that nothing may be wanting to prove the contrary of what he has aſſerted, he himſelf tells us, "in reaſoning from analogy, we argue "from a fact or thing experienced, to ſomething "ſimilar not experienced; and from our view of "the former ariſeth an opinion with regard to the "latter; which opinion will be found to imply a "greater or leſs degree of aſſurance, according "as the inſtance from which we argue is more or "leſs ſimilar to the inſtance to which we argue." Can there be found, in any writer whatſoever, a paſſage that ſo perfectly ſubverts the aſſertion, *that all reaſoning from analogy, traced to its ſource, will be found to terminate in a certain inſtinctive propenſity?* for can that aſſurance, which is obtained "by "arguing from a fact experienced, to ſomething "ſimilar not experienced, and thence deducing "a degree of aſſurance, according as the inſtance "from which we argue is more or leſs ſimilar to "the inſtance to which we argue," poſſibly be conceived to have ariſen from a certain inſtinctive propenſity, or from an inſtantaneous and irreſiſtible impulſe, which is Dr. *Beattie*'s Common Senſe?

But

But there is yet another inſtance, which he hath adduced to verify his aſſertion of an inſtinctive propenſity to the purpoſes above mentioned, which is ſtill more inconſiſtent and contradictory. Page 128, he ſays, "a child who has been burnt "with a red-hot coal, is careful to avoid touching "the flame of a candle; for, as the viſible quali- "ties of the latter are like to thoſe of the former, "he expects, with a very high degree of aſſurance, "that the effects produced by the candle, ope- "rating on his fingers, will be ſimilar to thoſe "produced by the burning coal." Now, if reaſoning by "analogy, when traced up to its ſource, "will be found to terminate in a certain inſtinc- "tive propenſity," how comes it to happen that this *inſtinctive* power, like all others of that kind, did not inſtantaneouſly operate, and prevent the child from touching the red-hot coal, and burning his fingers; and, without waiting to derive from experience, and from reaſoning on the pain which had been cauſed by the burning coal, that he ſhould again ſuffer in like manner, by touching the candle which reſembled the coal, and thereby teach him to abſtain from touching it? Surely, there can exiſt nothing leſs like an inſtinctive propenſity than this reaſoning analogically, from what had paſſed, that the like would again happen from ſubſtances ſo nearly reſembling, as a flaming coal and a flaming candle. This then is evidently

a con-

a concluſion drawn from experience, in which there is nothing either intuitive, inſtantaneous, or inſtinctive: it is therefore incompatible with Dr. *Beattie*'s common ſenſe, and perfectly conſentaneous with that of Pere *Buffier*, and other French writers.

Dr. *Beattie* tells us, however, "it deſerves to be "remarked, that the judgement which a child "forms on theſe occaſions may ariſe, and often "doth ariſe, previous to education and reaſon-"ing, and while experience is very limited." In my opinion, after Dr. *Beattie* has ſhewn that the diſinclination of a child to touch a candle aroſe from the experience of being burnt by the red-hot coal, he could not, conformably with that doctrine, have reaſonably ſaid, "that the judge-"ment which a child forms on theſe occaſions "does often ariſe previous to reaſoning," when it is manifeſt, that the reaſoning of the child by analogy, is the reaſoning that the wiſeſt perſon of any age could have exerted in ſuch caſe; and certainly he has afforded us no inſtance, that the judgement formed by a child on ſuch occaſions, hath ever ariſen previous to reaſoning, nor ſhewn how judgement can be formed without reaſoning. We cannot but agree, that, although their experience may be very limited, yet it is evident, that this experience is adequate to the full purpoſe of ſelf-preſervation.

But,

But, that no doubt may remain in the minds of his readers, that a child does *not* form a judgement on ſuch occaſions previous to reaſoning, he tells us, "A child, knowing that a lighted "candle is a dangerous object, will be ſhy of "touching a glow-worm, or a piece of wet fiſh, "ſhining in the dark, becauſe of their reſemblance "to the flame of a lighted candle; but, as this "reſemblance is but imperfect, his judgement "with regard to the conſequence of touching "will probably be more inclined to doubt, than "in the former caſe, where the inſtances were "more ſimilar."

Hence it is evident, that this inſtance, which is, *apparently*, adduced to evince that "the judge-"ment which a child forms on ſuch occaſions, "doth often ariſe, previous to reaſoning," is nevertheleſs the fulleſt evidence that he forms no ſuch previous judgement; and that he exerts every effort of reaſon that can be conceived, in ſuch a ſtate of things, by the wiſeſt of mortals: for, from being previouſly burnt by the lighted candle, he has acquired the experience of what will be the probable event of a ſimilar application to a ſimilar thing; and by comparing the phænomena of the glow-worm and the ſhining fiſh, with the light of the candle, he infers, that the former will have a like effect on his finger with the latter, and abſtains from touching its reſemblance.

But

But then, by a ſtill more accurate compariſon between theſe objects, he finds their reſemblance to be but imperfect; and thence his judgement entertains a doubt, whether the conſequences of touching the glow-worm and ſhining fiſh may be ſimilar to thoſe of touching the candle. Such is the proceſs of reaſoning which Dr. *Beattie* has brought to prove, that the judgement of a child, on ſuch occaſions, doth often ariſe previous to reaſoning; and that "reaſoning from analogy, "when traced up to its ſource, will be found to "terminate in a certain inſtinctive propenſity, "which leads us to expect, that ſimilar cauſes, "in ſimilar circumſtances, do probably produce, "or will probably produce, ſimilar effects;" and this inſtinctive propenſity is his *common ſenſe*, "that "perceives truth not by progreſſive argumenta-"tion, but by an inſtantaneous, inſtinctive, and "irreſiſtible impulſe;" or Dr. *Beattie* is miſtaken in what he has advanced.

I come now to his ſection *of Faith in Teſtimony*; and in this he ſays, "to believe teſtimony is "agreeable to nature, to reaſon, and to ſound "philoſophy;" to which I ſhall object nothing. But certainly the faculty of faith can never be the ſame with common ſenſe: and yet perhaps by this faculty, things are as intuitively believed, as objects are perceived by the external ſenſes; and the mind

mind receives them alſo as true, by a kind of inſtinctive propenſity to believe whatever is marvellous and intereſting. But in this ſection, Dr. *Beattie* has ſaid nothing either of *intuition*, or of *inſtinct*.

Such then is the truth reſpecting this writer. By deviating from the definition of common ſenſe as it is laid down by Pere *Buffier*, which conſiſts in a judgement acquired by age and the uſe of reaſon, and ſetting up another of his own conception, which diſcerns all things by an intuitive, irreſiſtible, inſtantaneous, and inſtinctive impulſe, he hath rendered the ſcience of that illuſtrious Author utterly inapplicable to his new principle. Notwithſtanding this, all that has the leaſt degree of merit, through his whole eſſay, is pillaged from the learned Jeſuit, and other writers among the French, and ungratefully concealed, without acknowledging the obligation.

Hence it ariſes, that what has been ſaid by *Beattie* in relation to the objects of common ſenſe, as perceiving truth by an intuitive, irreſiſtible, inſtantaneous, and inſtinctive impulſe, is totally erroneous, and that all is right and true, when conſidered as objects of common ſenſe, as it is delineated by *Buffier*, a judgement of things formed by age, and the uſe of reaſon.

One act of meritorious ſervice muſt nevertheleſs be aſcribed to Dr. *Beattie*. He hath expoſed

many of the errors and abſurdities of *Hume* his countryman, though a hundred times more remain to be deſcribed in their full deformity and miſchief. To the memory of that man, however, his countrymen have erected an edifice; and they have atrociouſly placed the monumental remembrance of this Atheiſt on a rock, in a place of Chriſtian burial, alluding, as I ſuppoſe, that his fame on that account deſerved to be founded on an unperiſhable baſis. What inſcription is inſerted on it, I know not, having ſeen nothing but a drawing of that monument. ‡

I ſhall now take leave of my Readers with requeſting them to compare the tranſlation of Pere *Buffier* with the publications of *Reid*, *Oſwald*, and *Beattie*; but more eſpecially with the latter two: they will then be convinced, how freely

‡ This monument, erected to the propagator of ſuch principles as would ſubvert all religion, and the providence of God, remains untouched; though not long ſince the places of Chriſtian worſhip, the ſacred veſſels belonging to the very altar itſelf, and other things of private property, were violated and deſtroyed by a rabble at Edinburgh, becauſe the Roman Catholics were adoring God according to their own conſciences. And it muſt not be forgotten, that theſe wanton acts of violence and injuſtice were openly perpetrated in the metropolis of Scotland, by the immediate inſtigation of ſome of the meek and pious diſciples of a merciful Redeemer, and with the notorious connivance and approbation of the worthy Magiſtrates of that Country, who, in the midſt of convivial mirth and jollity, ſecretly exulted at the very moment thoſe glorious operations of fanatic zeal were carrying on.

freely they have pillaged, and how deſignedly they have concealed their plagiariſms; they will then be convinced alſo, how egregiouſly they have mangled the production of the learned Jeſuit, and, by placing another head on the body which he had formed, how criminally they have attempted, by that alteration, to paſs their heterogeneous productions as legitimately begotten by themſelves: whereas, by thoſe means, they have endeavoured to make an union of admirable ſcience and inſtruction with a head incapable of being connected with it, but as a diſgrace; I mean, that, by rejecting the idea of *Buffier*, reſpecting Common Senſe, and by adopting another of their own fabrication, they have as it were reverſed the image of Nebuchadnezzar, and, inſtead of feet of clay, and a head of braſs, they have made the head of clay, and left the reſt of the body to remain in its original ſubſtance.

INDEX.

Page

DESIGN and diviſion of the work 1

PART I.

Of the different kinds of Firſt Truths, whence they are drawn, and what they have eſſentially in common 7

CHAP. I. *Of that ſpecies of Firſt Truths which are derived from the ſenſation we have of our own exiſtence* — 9

II. *Of thoſe who admit no other rule of Truth, but the internal ſentiment of what we feel within ourſelves* 12

III. *Conſequences of the opinion of ſome Philoſophers who admit no other evidence but the internal ſentiment of our own actual experience* 14

IV. *That the preceding conſequences oblige us to admit other rules of Truth*

and

Page

and evident certainty, beſides the internal ſenſation of our perception — — 18

CHAP. V. *Of that ſpecies of Firſt Truths, which is deduced from Common Senſe, which is rarely mentioned by Philoſophers* 21

VI. *Digreſſion on the truth of the exiſtence of God, in order to examine whether it is a Firſt Truth* — 27

VII. *A new explanation, with examples of the* qualities eſſential to *Firſt Truths* —— — 32

VIII. *That the certainty of Firſt Truths is not weakened by thoſe ſubtle arguments with which ſome people attempt to oppoſe them* —— — 43

IX. *Why Common Senſe is not found equally in all men* — 50

X. *Elucidation of ſome difficulties which might remain with reſpect to the ſpecies of Firſt Truths, which are derived from Common Senſe* 55

XI. *Whether the common metaphyſical axioms are Firſt Truths, and of what nature* — — — 59

XII. *Whether there are no other Firſt Truths, but thoſe of which the idea is common to all men* 65

CHAP.

Pag.

CHAP. XIII. *Application of the rule of common Senſe in order to diſcover in what true beauty conſiſts* — 66

XIV. *Of the teſtimony of our ſenſes, and in what manner it holds the place of a Firſt Truth.* — — 75

XV. *In what our ſenſes are not a rule of of Truth* — — 80

XVI. *What may hold the place of Firſt Truths in the teſtimony of the ſenſes* 84

XVII. *Elucidation of a difficulty propoſed by ſome Philoſophers relative to the error of our ſenſes with reſpect to the extent of objects of ſight* —— 89

XVIII. *A recapitulation of the circumſtances required to make the teſtimony of the ſenſes a rule of truth* —— 94

XIX. *Of human authority, which in certain circumſtances holds the place of a Firſt Truth* —— 95

XX. *An appendix on memory; whether it is a rule of Truth* —— 103

XXI. *Of rules of probability which ſupply the place of Firſt Truths in the common conduct of life* —— 105

XXII. *Of different degrees and ſpecies of probability* —— —— 111

XXIII. *Elucidation of a particular difficulty, relative to the probability that is found*

founded on teſtimonies tranſmitted from one perſon to another —— 115
XXIV. *Of the uſe of Probability* —— 121

PART II.

CHAP. I. *Of beings in general* —— 129
II. *Of the eſſence of beings* —— 130
III. *An enquiry relative to two ideas of Eſſence; one of which is attributed to Plato, and the other to Des Cartes* —— —— 135
IV. *Of things that are ſaid to have a ſimilar or different eſſence* —— 139
V. *Particular obſervations with reſpect to the idea of eſſence, or ſimilar eſſence* 143
VI. *An enquiry into the manner by which the definition explains or contains the nature or eſſence of things* —— 146
VII. *The difference between the definition of the word, and that of the thing explained* —— —— 149
VIII. *Of properties* —— —— 155
IX. *Of qualities* —— —— 156
X. *Of unity, or the multiplicity of beings* 158
XI. *Of identity and diverſity* —— 167
XII. *Of finite and infinite* —— 173
XIII. *Of what is poſſible and impoſſible* 181
XIV. *Of what is perfect or imperfect* 189
XV. *Of good, or what is good* —— 199

Pag.

CHAP. XVI. *Of order* —— —— 204
XVII. *Of act, and action* —— 208
XVIII. *The queſtion as to accidental cauſes explained, in order to know whether creatures act, or God alone* — 215
XIX. *Preciſe ideas calculated to explain what* TO ACT, ACTION, CAUSE, *and* EFFECT, *are* —— —— 224
XX. WHAT IS NATURAL, *conſidered in oppoſition to* SUPERNATURAL *and* ARTIFICIAL —— —— 230
XXI. *Of ſubſtance and accident* —— 236
XXII. *Anſwers to ſome difficulties with reſpect to ſubſtance and ſubſiſtence* 240
XXIII. *Of ſimple and compound* —— 243
XXIV. *Of what is neceſſary, accidental, or free* —— —— 245
XXV. *Of the nature of what is termed poſitive, negative, and privation* 249
XXVI. *Of a whole and its parts* —— 254
XXVII. *Of duration and time* —— 256
XXVIII. *Of relation* —— —— 260

PART III.

CHAP. I. *Of the nature of ſpiritual beings in general, and of the human ſoul in particular* —— —— 271

II. *Of*

Pag:

CHAP. II. *Of the properties of the ſoul* —— 278
III. *Of the liberty of the human ſoul* 283
IV. *Of the act of the underſtanding, requiſite for the exerciſe of* FREE WILL 287
V. *Elucidation of a difficulty, with reſpect to liberty, that has exerciſed the minds of ſome eminent Philoſophers* —— —— 298
VI. *Whether the human mind or ſoul always thinks* —— — 303
VII. *Of what is naturally unknown to us, with regard to the properties of the ſoul; and how irrational it is to be determined in any opinion concerning them* —— —— 305
VIII. *What can be ſaid that is intelligible with reſpect to ideas* —— 311
IX. *Of the origin, duration, and immortality of the ſoul* —— 313
X. *Of the firſt principle of our ſoul, of all that God is, and of his exiſtence* 321
XI. *Of middle intelligences between God and the human ſoul, or of pure ſpiritual beings.* —— —— 330

PART IV.

CHAP. I. *Of the matter of bodies* —— 337
II. *Of Form* —— — 347

A P-

APPENDIX.

Pag.

First Truths in the Sciences of Natural Philoſophy, Phyſic, Juriſprudence and Divinity — 351
NATURAL PHILOSOPHY — — 353
Phyſic — — 358
Juriſprudence — — 363
Divinity — — 371
REMARKS *on Des Cartes* — — 381
— *on Locke* — — 397
— *on Malbranche* — — 416
— *on Le Clerc* — — 423
— *on Crouzas* — — 424
— *on Regis* — — 435

A TREATISE ON FIRST TRUTHS.

PLAN and DIVISION of the WORK.

NO ſubject can perhaps open a larger field to the expectations of the Reader, and be, at the ſame time, more alarming to the fears of the author, than what is treated of in this volume. To know truths in their very ſource; to analyſe thoſe to which we muſt aſcend, in order to aſcertain whatever is neceſſary to be proved, and which conſtitute the utmoſt boundary of human enquiry; to deduce principles capable of diſpelling the miſt of vulgar prejudice, the perplexities of the ſchools, and the prepoſſeſſions even of certain learned and modiſh philoſophers—what can be a more intereſting object?

1. Subject of the piece.

PLAN.

2. The Author proceeds to inveſtigate all truths in their ſource.

The perception, in fact, of firſt truths is, as it were, the key to all the ſciences; the ſource or cauſe of every juſt deciſion; the ſureſt guide to the moſt accurate knowledge; the very ſoul and eſſence, in ſome ſort, of all truth in general, which Logic attains only in part, though it has the honour to be ſtyled the organ of truth; but it is no more than the organ of truth conſequentially: and this ſuppoſes principles already known; ſo that, as experience demonſtrates, a man may be an excellent Logician, and yet fall into conſiderable errors, from an imperfect knowledge of the firſt truths; whilſt thoſe, which are to be drawn from the inmoſt receſſes and moſt immediate operations of the human mind, belong to that more extenſive ſcience which forms the ſubject of this treatiſe. If it ſhall be conſidered by ſome as truly metaphyſical, they will not perhaps be miſtaken; but, whatever it may be, it muſt ſo cloſely accompany, precede or follow Logic, that they mutually lend a neceſſary ſupport to each other. Logic therefore remains in ſome meaſure incomplete, until it be joined to this, which likewiſe, in various places, ſuppoſes the former; but thoſe two articles, being united, furniſh every thing that relates to the ſcience of the human underſtanding, and teach us to form thence the true art of thinking juſtly, and with preciſion;—the object moſt deſerving the attention of man; the moſt ſolid fruit of ſcience.

If

PLAN.

1. Difficulty of the ſubject.

If the ſubject of this book be intereſting to the Reader, how very formidable muſt it appear to the author! The reſearches it neceſſarily implies, demand reflections that are frequently abſtruſe; and, whatever care may be taken to explain them in the cleareſt manner, they are little reliſhed, and frequently as little underſtood, by men of ordinary capacity. I have in this work endeavoured to found them on common ſenſe; but common ſenſe itſelf is not always eaſily conceived, or preciſely underſtood, by thoſe who have not made themſelves familiar with objects above the capacity and notions of the vulgar.

4. Cenſures of ſcholaſtic Philoſophers to be dreaded;

It would be ſome conſolation could we ſecurely hope for the approbation of the learned; but this is another difficulty we have to encounter. Thoſe who, by their profeſſion, affect to be maſters in abſtracted ſubjects, are ſometimes miſtaken in the moſt important truths, when they are not dreſſed with the formalities and expreſſions that have the ſanction of their authority. We can ſurely have but little to hope from men who treat Logic as ſuperficial, merely becauſe they find it to contain nothing but what is intelligible, becauſe it is ſtripped of falſe ſubtilties, and becauſe the practice and rules are ſo far abridged, that the difficulties with which it generally abounds appear next to nothing.

PLAN.

5. and of modiſh Philoſophers.

If I have thus reaſon to dread the attacks of ſome ſcholaſtic philoſophers—I ſay, of ſome only; for many, no doubt, are capable of uniting acuteneſs with ſolidity of argument—what better treatment can be expected from thoſe who have acquired celebrity by their new plan of philoſophy? Their very names are ſo much revered, that to many they appear impreſſed with a ſpecies of infallibility. I cannot, however, perſuade myſelf that the great names of Des Cartes, Malbranche, and others of ſimilar renown, are more to be apprehended than thoſe of Plato and Ariſtotle; and I muſt confeſs, that I ſhould think it a reproach to be alarmed at either, or to heſitate in adopting an opinion contrary to theirs, when under the guidance of reaſon. We are indebted to Des Cartes for a methodical mode of reaſoning, derived from his writings or example; and our obligations to him are even greater than ſome of his followers imagine, becauſe his method is ſometimes uſeful in attacking himſelf. Malbranche ſeduced the imagination of many; but the Metaphyſics of Locke have detached a great part of Europe from ſyſtems which are chiefly founded on the notion that we have no clear evidence of common principles, whilſt we are more in the dark with reſpect to thoſe ſubſtituted in their place. The ancients gave into extremes; their reformers have fallen into

others:

PLAN.

others: a medium is to be obſerved, particularly in the inveſtigation of firſt truths.

6. Great importance of the knowledge of firſt truths.

The important advantages of diſtinguiſhing firſt truths are of themſelves obvious. By what means, in fact, is the little knowledge of which we are capable, rendered defective? It is, becauſe, in the courſe of our arguments, propoſitions occur which raiſe doubts in our minds, or are differently conceived by others. We then endeavour to prove them: if our proofs fail to convince, we adduce others: but, in aſcending thus from one proof to another, propoſitions muſt at length be found, that require none; otherwiſe life would be conſumed in accumulating proofs, without proving any thing deciſively, and without our having any fixed idea. To this we muſt attribute the frequent confuſion and uncertainty in our opinions and judgements. Hence it evidently follows, that there are ſuch propoſitions as require neither explanation nor proof; but it is of the laſt importance to know them: and thoſe are what we denominate *firſt truths*.

7. Some perſons aſk whether there are any firſt truths.

Some perſons aſk whether there really exiſt any ſuch things as firſt truths. In anſwer to thoſe, I ſay that ſuch a matter deſerves enquiry; and at any rate, if no others ſhould reſult from our reſearches, we ſhould at leaſt diſcover that there was no truth upon earth: and this alone would ſupply their place; for, if there be no firſt truths,

PLAN. neither can there be ſecond, third, &c. In that caſe there muſt be nothing true, and it would even be folly to ſeek for truth in any thing, though the higheſt wiſdom conſiſts in ſeeking it in all things.

8. First truths defined. As things are beſt underſtood by plain and ſimple expreſſions, it will be ſufficient to give an exact definition of firſt truths. They are then *propoſitions ſo clear and obvious, that they can neither be proved nor refuted by other propoſitions of greater perſpicuity.* All I have to offer therefore on a ſubject of ſo much importance, and which is the baſis of every ſcience, ſhall be reduced to few heads, and form the different parts of this work.

Diviſion of the work. Firſt, What are the different kinds of firſt truths, whence they are derived, and what eſſential relation they have together.

Secondly, What firſt truths may be diſcovered with reſpect to all beings in general.

Thirdly, What are firſt truths with regard to ſpiritual beings.

Fourthly, Firſt truths with reſpect to material or corporeal beings.

As an Appendix to this, ſhall be added ſuch knowledge as may hold the place of firſt truths with regard to each of the ſciences more generally known.

PART I.

Of the different kinds of Firſt Truths; whence they are deduced, and the eſſential relation they mutually have.

CHAPTER I.

Of that ſpecies of Firſt Truths which are derived from the ſenſation we have of our own exiſtence, and from what we feel within ourſelves.

9. Inward ſenſation or feeling. First ſpecies of truth.

THE original ſource and firſt principle of every truth which we are capable of comprehending, is the interior ſenſe we each of us have of our own exiſtence, and what we feel within ourſelves. This is, I ſay, the foundation of every other truth, and the baſis of all human knowledge. Nothing elſe can give us a more home conviction that the object of our thought is as truly exiſtent as our thought itſelf; for the object, the thought, and the inward ſenſe we have of them, are really nothing but ourſelves, who think, exiſt, and have an interior ſenſe of thoſe things.

10. To go beyond this, is to plunge into darkneſs.

Every attempt to prove this point, or to ſet it in a clearer light, would only ſerve to render it more dark and unintelligible: to go farther, would be to ſeek ſomething clearer than the very light itſelf, and muſt inevitably lead to darkneſs.

We

PART I.

We muſt neceſſarily adhere to this firſt rule, which is of itſelf moſt apparent, and therefore termed evidence in the ſupreme degree. Sceptics may in vain object, that they doubt whether they exiſt or not: it would be loſs of time to attempt to convince them of their folly, by telling them that, if they doubt of every thing, it muſt be therefore true that they exiſt, as they cannot doubt without exiſting. They have it always in their power to aſſert the contrary, though they may think otherwiſe, and ſhelter themſelves under ridiculous terms, of which it would be equally ridiculous to attempt a ſerious refutation. It is a folly to ſhew the truth to thoſe who endeavour to ſhut their eyes againſt it, and who will not even admit the firſt propoſition of invincible evidence, *I think, I feel, I exiſt.*

11. Sceptics do not merit a refutation.

12. Proof of our exiſtence, by Des Cartes.

This has given riſe to the queſtion, whether Des Cartes did not fall into an error, by propoſing his own exiſtence as a conſequence of his actual thought, when he ſaid, *I think, therefore I am*; for it is by the ſame perception of the ſoul we feel the internal ſenſe both of our thought and our exiſtence. If Des Cartes abſolutely pretended to give us thereby a freſh conviction of our exiſtence, as ſome people have ſuppoſed, his endeavours were uſeleſs and puerile: but thoſe who defend him aſſert, that his only view, in urging ſuch an argument, was to give us an example

example of the analyſis of the moſt ſimple conſequences that can be drawn from a principle; for, in fact, *I exiſt* is a conſequence of the propoſition *I think*, as we cannot think without exiſting. *I think*, however, is not a conſequence of the propoſition *I exiſt*, ſince we may exiſt without thinking: but the conſequence here is ſo intimately united with its principle, that there can be no danger of a miſtake; and yet it requires ſome acuteneſs to perceive how far one is not the other. Thus the famous conſequence *I think, therefore I am*, is ſtrictly true and juſt: it has but little merit however as a conſequence, and ſtill leſs as a diſcovery.

13. Metaphyſical demonſtrations evident in the ſupreme degree.

A more important reflection to be made is, that every conſequence, which is clearly deduced from our actual thought, partakes of the nature of its evident certainty in the ſupreme degree; and ſuch are thoſe demonſtrations we term metaphyſical, or geometrical, which are nothing but our actual thought applied to different circumſtances. We ſhall however dwell no longer on this ſubject at preſent, as we mean to explain it more fully in another place.

PART I.

CHAPTER II.

Of thoſe who admit no other rule of truth but the internal ſentiment of what we feel within ourſelves.

14. Sceptics deſpiſed, and yet imitated.

WHAT has been advanced in the preceding chapter againſt ſceptics, though confined to a few lines, may perhaps appear ſuperfluous, as their folly is ſo univerſally acknowledged and deſpiſed: but, if abſolute ſcepticiſm be now no longer maintained, we may however venture to declare, that it never was more cloſely imitated; for, excepting the firſt rule or ſource of truth which is drawn from our internal ſentiment, ſome philoſophers of theſe days diſdain to acknowledge or admit any other kinds of truth and evidence.

15. Evidence with regard to the exiſtence of bodies.

When they are therefore aſked, if it be evidently certain that there are bodies, and that we receive impreſſions from them, they roundly anſwer, No: we have no evident certainty of the matter; becauſe, ſay they, we have not ſuch knowledge, either by an internal ſenſation of our own experience, or by any neceſſary conſequence that may be deduced from it. This an Engliſh philoſopher has made no ſcruple to publiſh to the world.

What

What other evident certainty is to be admitted by thoſe philoſophers, we cannot even conjecture: Is it the teſtimony of the ſenſes, divine revelation, human authority, or, in ſhort, the immediate impreſſion of God upon us?

16. Their ſyſtem does not admit any other certainty:

The teſtimony of the ſenſes, being corporeal, cannot be admitted by thoſe who previouſly deny the exiſtence of bodies. Divine revelation and human authority likewiſe make no impreſſion upon us but by the teſtimony of the ſenſes; that is, either by our eyes, which have ſeen the miracles of the Almighty; or of our ears, which have heard the diſcourſes of men ſent by him: but thoſe channels of the ſenſes muſt be looked upon as uncertain by him who has no evidence of the exiſtence of bodies.

17. neither that of the ſenſes, nor of authority;

In fine, the immediate impreſſion of God ſuppoſes a God, and a being different from me. Now, if the internal ſentiment of what I am, and of what paſſes within me, be the only things evident, whatever is not abſolutely that internal ſentiment muſt not be evident to me. We ſhall ſet this matter in a ſtronger light in the next chapter.

18. nor that of the immediate impreſſion of God.

CHAPTER III.

Conſequences of the opinion of ſome philoſophers, who admit no other evidence but the internal ſentiments of our own actual experience.

39. Manner of proving that there is no certainty with regard to the exiſtence of bodies:

THE firſt conſequence of this principle, which we have already touched upon, is very natural: it is, that we have no evident certainty of the exiſtence of bodies, not even of our own; for, in ſhort, a mind or ſoul, ſuch as ours, may feel the impreſſion made on it by other bodies, or by its own in particular. As its body, however, is very diſtinct from this impreſſion; and as, according to thoſe gentlemen, this impreſſion, or another exactly ſimilar, may be abſolutely felt in the ſoul without the exiſtence of bodies; it follows alſo, that our internal ſentiment affords no conviction of the exiſtence of any body, and that we have no evident certainty of any ſuch matter.

40. nor with regard to our own exiſtence before our actual perception:

2dly. Another conſequence equally juſt is, that we have no evident certainty of what did or did not happen to us yeſterday, whether we exiſted, or did not exiſt. I think, for my own part, I am evidently certain that I was in the world yeſterday: but this judgement may be liable to error, according to the philoſophers of whom we have been ſpeaking. Their opinion is, that I can have no evidence but by

by an internal perception actually operating: I actually have indeed the perception of the remembrance of what happened to me; but this remembrance is no more than an inward perception of what I am thinking at preſent; that is to ſay, of an actual thought which is not the ſame with that of yeſterday, and no longer exiſts to day. By a parity of reaſon, I muſt be ſtill leſs certain whether I have not been in the world two or three thouſand years; and whether, during that long period of time, I may not have animated the body of a crocodile, an elephant, or a ſparrow. It is very evident that I have no remembrance of any ſuch thing; but all this might have been ſo, without any actual remembrance of mine; as it really happens to each of us to remain many months in the womb of our mother, without our having the leaſt traces of any ſuch matter on our mind. Want of memory is therefore no proof or evident certainty againſt what may be ſuppoſed with regard to the antiquity of my exiſtence, and the various ſituations through which I may have paſſed, according to the ſyſtem of the Metempſycoſis.

21. nor whether we may not have exiſted from all eternity.

With the ſame facility and reflection each of us muſt be perſuaded, that we have no evident certainty whether we have not exiſted eternally, as we might have exiſted in that manner without remembering it. Should it be objected, that

we

PART I.

we have been produced, we may anſwer, that we have no evident certainty thereof; for our having been produced is a thing paſt, and is neither the perception nor the internal ſenſation of what actually paſſes within us. We might, ſay we, have an internal perception by which we judge that we have been produced; but the perception of what we judge and believe, is not the inward perception of the thing itſelf which we believe, but merely of the thought by which we believe that we have exiſted before the preſent moment.

22. nor whether any other being exiſts beſides ourſelves:

Another conſequence, in fine, equally juſt with the preceding, is, that we have each of us no certainty of the exiſtence of any other beings in the world beſides ourſelves; for, if impreſſions be made in us, the occaſion of which we attribute to ſpirits and intelligences that are ſuppoſed to exiſt diſtinct from us, and we have an internal ſenſation of thoſe impreſſions received in us; yet, as this internal ſenſation carries no conviction but of itſelf, and is altogether interior, it gives us no evident certainty of any being diſtinct from ourſelves.

Let the ſoul, in fact, reflect as long as it will on its own perceptions, the occaſion of which it aſcribes to intelligences different from itſelf, it muſt reaſon thereon as it does with regard to thoſe ideas the cauſe of which it attributes to bodies.

bodies. Now, as the ſoul, according to the philoſophers we are ſpeaking of, is not evidently certain whether it may not be of ſuch a nature as, of itſelf, and by its own form and conſtitution alone, to experience the impreſſions of which it aſcribes the cauſe to bodies that exiſt ſeparate from it, it has not a more evident certainty of the exiſtence of any ſpirit or being whatever, excluſive of itſelf; therefore it has no evidence to prove that it has not exiſted from all eternity, or even to ſhew that it is not the only being that exiſts in the world.

25. nor whether impreſſions externallyproduced are not the mere modifications of our being.

After ſo ſingular a conſequence, it is uſeleſs to point out all the numerous arguments which might be deduced to ſhew, that I have no evidence whether I am actually aſleep, or awake; whether I enjoy the liberty of acting, or not acting; the privilege of free-will, or otherwiſe; whether I am the cauſe, or only the occaſion, of the free motions of my ſoul; and whether one body may ever be acted upon by another body. All thoſe conſequences are ſo obvious and glaring of themſelves, that they require no further elucidation.

PART I.

CHAPTER IV.

That the preceding conſequences oblige us to admit other rules of truth and evident certainty, beſides the internal ſenſation of our perception.

24. The preceding conſequences are juſt, though extravagant.

FROM the extravagance of the propoſitions contained in the laſt chapter, many will, perhaps, imagine that they have been inſerted rather with a jocular deſign, than in order to prove any thing ſolid: but, ſhould any of our Readers entertain ſuch an idea, it is our requeſt that they may examine, with the ſtricteſt ſeverity, whether they are not neceſſarily deduced from their principle, and that too as clearly as any geometrical demonſtrations.

25. No man in his ſenſes ſeriouſly admits them.

I am in no pain, however, as to the judgement that may be formed with reſpect to the truth of ſome of thoſe conſequences; ſuch as our having a right, each of us, to doubt whether we are not the only beings that exiſt in the world. I am convinced that no man of ſound intellect will be tempted to conſider this as true, or to ſuppoſe that any other men in their ſenſes can ſeriouſly maintain ſuch an opinion; or, to ſpeak more plainly, every perſon muſt look upon thoſe who could attempt it as downright madmen.

I ſhall

I ſhall not at preſent enter into a detail of other conſequences; for, if one alone be found abſurd, that is neceſſarily derived from the principle, it of courſe follows, that the principle itſelf muſt be abſurd: and this is ſufficient for all that I now wiſh to prove.

26. If they are abſurd, their principle is equally ſo.

Let us ſum up the parts of this argument. One, at leaſt, of the conſequences we have pointed out, is an abſurd propoſition: it is however neceſſarily and clearly deduced from its principle: therefore their principle is equally abſurd; for it is demonſtrable, that conſequences are of the ſame nature with their principle. It is not then true, that we have no other rule of evident certainty but the internal ſentiment of our own action.

27. This principle ſhould be rejected;

Men may in vain ſay, that no others can be offered, but what are liable to error. This point ſhall be examined hereafter: for the preſent we ſhall only obſerve, that, as the former neceſſarily leads to abſurdities, it muſt in itſelf be ſubject to the moſt ſtupid errors; becauſe it tends to exclude all certainty of every thing diſtinct from ourſelves, ſuch as God, the creatures, every other being, and particularly all bodies, and even all that we have ſaid, done, or thought, but a moment before the actual thought we form of thoſe matters.

PART I.

This would be to leave the world without any principle of *truth*, as to what is diſtinct from ourſelves, with regard to thoſe things that affect and intereſt us the moſt, and which are the great incentive to action, and the main-ſpring, as it were, of our whole life; it would be ſaying, in other words, that there is no longer any fixed rule of reaſon, conduct, or common ſenſe: but, whatever certain philoſophers may aſſert to the contrary, the world ſtill poſſeſſes common ſenſe, conduct, and reaſon, and conſequently truth, certainty, and evidence, with reſpect to things diſtinct from us.

28. eſpecially as the contrary propoſitions are judicious,

Propoſitions moreover, the reverſe of conſequences which we find manifeſtly abſurd, are, by the laws of contrariety, neceſſarily judicious.

29. though their certainty is not an internal ſenſation.

Our certainty, for example, that we have not always exiſted with the uſe of reaſon, and a number of other ſimilar certainties of univerſal experience, are not in fact the internal ſenſation of any actual perception of the ſoul, as they relate to things paſt; and, as what is no more, cannot be the ſenſation of our actual perception, this certainly therefore muſt be referred to another ſource, or rule of truth, to which ſome perſons ſeem to be ſtrangers: and this I ſhall call *the common ſentiment of nature*, or, as it is generally ſtyled, *common ſenſe*; the nature of which I ſhall endeavour to explain.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

Of that ſpecies of firſt truths deduced from the rule of common ſenſe, which is rarely mentioned by philoſophers.

30. Importance of the rule of common ſenſe.

THIS title will perhaps appear new in a treatiſe of philoſophy, as philoſophers ſeldom make it a ſubject of their reflections; either from a notion that *common ſenſe* is an object too vulgar to engage their attention, or from finding it no eaſy taſk to aſcertain its nature and prerogatives with clearneſs and preciſion. Whatever may be the cauſe, the greateſt errors, in my opinion, have been produced from an imperfect idea of this matter: in it are to be found principles inconteſtable, and at the ſame time plauſible, of all that a rational man is capable of knowing, with regard to thoſe firſt *truths* that relate to extraneous objects.

31. The words *common ſenſe* have different meanings.

Though no expreſſion is more frequently heard than that of *common ſenſe*, yet nothing is leſs generally known than the preciſe idea which thoſe words ſhould convey; for they may be taken in various ſenſes, which form ſo many different ideas.

PART I.

Many conſider it as a faculty ſeated in the brain, with which, as with their centre, all the faculties of each of the ſenſes, of the ſight, hearing, taſte, ſmell, and feeling, have a communication; but the common ſenſe here underſtood is ſomething more perfect, and more eſſential to man, and may be poſſeſſed by him, though he ſhould be deprived of one or more of the ſenſes.

32. It is not a mere corporeal faculty.

33. Definition of common ſenſe.

What is here meant by common ſenſe, is *that diſpoſition or quality which Nature has placed in all men, or evidently in the far greater number of them, in order to enable them all, when they have arrived at the age and uſe of reaſon, to form a common and uniform judgement with reſpect to objects different from the internal ſentiment of their own perception, and which judgement is not the conſequence of any anterior principle.* To ſuch as deſire examples of thoſe opinions that are chiefly verified by the rule and power of common ſenſe, the following are offered.

34. Firſt truths dictated by common ſenſe.

1. There are other beings and other men in the world beſides me.

2. There is in them ſomething that is called truth, wiſdom, prudence; and this ſomething is not merely arbitrary.

3. There is in me ſomething that I call intelligence or mind, and ſomething which is not that intelligence or mind, and which is named

body; ſo that each poſſeſſes properties different from the other. CHAP. V.

4. What is generally ſaid and thought by men in all ages and countries of the world, is true.

5. All men have not combined to deceive and impoſe on me.

6. What is not intelligence, or mind, cannot produce all the effects of intelligence or mind; neither can a fortuitous jumble of particles of matter form a work of ſuch order, and ſo regular motion, as a watch.

It is not my intention to confine the number of firſt truths to the preceding ſix or ſeven, nor that they ſhould be admitted equally, and with the ſame readineſs, by all mankind: but they are ſo many examples, ſome of which at leaſt cannot be juſtly rejected; and they are all of ſuch a nature, that if, in the practice of life, any perſon ſhould ſeriouſly refuſe to admit them as truths, we could not avoid conſidering him ſeriouſly as one diſordered in his ſenſes.

Let us now proceed to a more particular conſideration of the parts of the definition already given of common ſenſe.

35. Primitive knowledge different from the ſentiment of our own perception.

1ſt. I ſay that Nature enables men, who have arrived at the uſe of reaſon, to judge of things which we know not by the internal perception

PART I.

of our own experience. We have ſhewn that no perſon, without being guilty of extravagance, can deny certain truths, which cannot, in any manner, be proved by internal ſentiment, and which are truths eſſential to the buſineſs of life; ſuch, at leaſt, is this; *other beings, and in particular other men, exiſt beſides myſelf.*

36. Truths that require no proof.

2dly. I ſay, that true judgements or opinions, dictated by Nature and common ſenſe, are *firſt truths:* for I declare thoſe to be judgements ſo clear, that they neither can be defended nor attacked by propoſitions more clear.

37. They are common to all mankind.

3dly. I ſay that the natural diſpoſition by which thoſe firſt truths are inſpired is common to all men, or, at leaſt, to the far more conſiderable number of them; otherwiſe the want of principles would incapacitate the greater part from forming any true and certain judgement with reſpect to extraneous matters, however eſſential thoſe might be to the conduct of life; that is, they would be incapable of reaſon or conduct.

38. They neceſſarily determine the mind,

4thly. I ſay that thoſe judgements or opinions are rules of truth, as real and ſecure as the rule drawn from the internal ſentiment of our perception: not that they ſtrike the mind in the ſame forcible manner, but with the like neceſſity of aſſent. As it is impoſſible for me, therefore, to judge that I do not think when I am actually think-

thinking, ſo it is equally impoſſible for me to judge ſeriouſly that *I am the only being in the world; that all men have conſpired to deceive me in every thing they ſay; and that a work of human induſtry, ſuch as a watch or clock, which regularly marks the hours, might be the mere effect of chance.*

39. They have no anterior truths.

As the man who ſhould diſpute the certainty of his own exiſtence, could not be convinced of it by any prior, or more ſimple truth; in like manner, if a perſon ſhould maintain that a watch might have been formed by chance or accident, the contrary could never be demonſtrated to him by another truth more ſimple, or more evident; for every demonſtration ſuppoſes a principle admitted between him who is to convince and the perſon to be convinced: but, in the caſe ſpecified, there could be no common principle between them, as there would be no prior truth, about which they might be agreed, relative to the matter to be proved.

40. Difference of their certainty from that of the internal ſentiment.

We muſt however acknowledge, that there is a diſtinction to be made between the firſt ſpecies of truth derived from internal ſentiment, and every other ſort of firſt truths; for, with reſpect to the former, we cannot ſuppoſe it ſuſceptible of the leaſt ſhadow of doubt; and in regard to the reſt it may be alledged, that they do not poſſeſs an evidence in the ſupreme degree: but we muſt ſtill remember, that, as the other firſt truths, which

are

PART I.

are not of the former kind, relate only to objects diſtinct from us, they cannot make ſo lively an impreſſion on us, as thoſe of which the object is within ourſelves; ſo that to deny the former we ſhould be out of ourſelves, and to diſpute the reſt we muſt only be out of our ſenſes. To avoid, therefore, every ſubterfuge and equivocation, in caſe any perſons ſhould obſtinately refuſe the title of evident certainty to all other truths but the firſt kind, that is, the internal ſentiment of our own immediate perception, and allow only the name of *probability in the ſupreme degree* to the reſt; this, it is clear, would be cavilling merely about words, and ſhould give me no manner of pain; for they muſt ſtill coincide in opinion with me, that thoſe ſorts of *probabilities in the ſupreme degree*, are deemed *evident certainties* with mankind; and whoever ſhould doubt them in the practice of life, muſt renounce all title to common ſenſe.

41. Common ſenſe is not an innate idea.

Common ſenſe, however, as I have explained it, is not an innate idea, as ſome perſons may imagine: nor can it be conſidered as ſuch, without confounding our notions of things; for, in ſaying *idea*, we ſay an actual thought; and what is meant here, is no more than a diſpoſition to think certain things on certain occaſions. Beſides, an idea is nothing but a ſimple repreſentation of things; and the queſtion here relates to a judgement

ment formed with reſpect to things and their existence. CHAP. V.

This, after all, is perhaps no more than what was meant by thoſe who have been ſuch warm advocates for *innate ideas*, without having ever ſufficiently examined theſe terms: but, if they underſtand by *innate ideas* what I mean by *common ſenſe*, I ſhall not cavil about words; and, as they cannot avoid coinciding with me, and admitting *common ſenſe* for the firſt rule of truth, I ſhall readily agree to admit their *innate ideas*, taking them however in their preciſe and true ſignification.

CHAPTER VI.

Digreſſion, on the truth of the exiſtence of God, in order to examine whether it is a firſt truth.

40. Whether the exiſtence of God is a firſt truth.

IT may be aſked whether the truth of the exiſtence of God is not one of thoſe principles of truth, or one of thoſe firſt truths, which nature and common ſenſe dictate to all men; and whether this is not what is meant when we ſay that we know God naturally, and by the natural idea alone which we have of him. This queſtion admits of two remarks.

43. It may not be ſo, though naturally known.

I. The exiſtence of God may be naturally known without being a firſt truth; for, whatever we

PART I. we know by rational concluſions drawn from any of the firſt truths, we know it naturally with as great certainty as thoſe very firſt truths themſelves. Thus we naturally know that the ſun is incomparably greater than the whole earth, though there is a truth more ſimple, more immediately obvious to, and more eaſily conceived by, the mind.

44. It may be a firſt truth with reſpect to ſome,

In caſe any men ſhould appear endowed with ſufficient penetration to perceive certain conſequences as quickly, as the firſt truths whence they are derived; the knowledge of God might be then conſidered as a *firſt truth* to ſome minds.

45. and not with regard to all.

With reſpect to others, and even to the general race of men, there are, I think, firſt truths more immediately obvious to the mind, and which it conceives more quickly and eaſily, than the knowledge of God. It even appears incontrovertible, that children have a knowledge of many things, relative to ſenſible and corporeal objects, before that; or rather the knowledge of ſenſible objects forms, generally ſpeaking, neceſſary degrees by which we aſcend to the knowledge of God. This is what the apoſtle St. Paul intimates to us in thoſe remarkable words, *Inviſibilia enim ipſius à creatura mundi per ea quæ facta ſunt, intellecta conſpiciuntur, ſempiterna quoque ejus virtus & divinitas*— that is, *We attain to the knowledge of the inviſible being of God by the things of this world that have*

been

been created and formed; and they likewiſe diſplay the eternity of his power and divinity.

46. Whether ſavages have not a knowledge of God.

This may help to ſolve a difficulty propoſed by certain perſons with reſpect to ſome few ſavages, among whom it is ſaid, no traces could be found of the knowledge of God. This diſcovery, if true, ſhews plainly that the idea of God is neither *innate*, nor a firſt truth; but it does not by any means prove, that it is not a very natural and very eaſy knowledge. If thoſe ſavages have not expanded their ideas, or exerciſed their minds, more than is uſual with children among us, we ſhould not wonder at their not having acquired a knowledge of ſuch eaſy acquiſition: but, however weak their underſtanding might be, the moment the proofs of the exiſtence of a God were laid before them, it was found that they had ſufficient capacity to comprehend them.

47. Truths more immediately obvious to the mind.

With the common race of men, however, it appears that there are ſome truths anterior to the knowledge of the exiſtence of God; as theſe: *I am not as I am from myſelf; there are other beings beſides me; there are bodies; the ſubordination that reigns through the whole cannot have been produced but by ſome ſuperior intelligence.* Thus the truth of the exiſtence of God, as it ſuppoſes other knowledge, is not a firſt truth evident of itſelf; for, however evident any truth may be when it is ſo only by rational deduction and argument, and ſuppoſes

PART I.

ſuppoſes another truth that is prior, it cannot be placed in the number of firſt truths.

48. Metaphyſical evidence and demonſtration.

We here offer our aſſiſtance to certain philoſophers, as it may be uſeful in extricating them from thoſe difficulties in which they involve themſelves by endeavouring to find a metaphyſical proof or demonſtration of the exiſtence of God. All that is neceſſary for them, on the occaſion, is to agree with others and themſelves about what they are pleaſed to call *metaphyſical evidence*. They generally will have it to conſiſt in the perception of what we intimately experience within ourſelves, of our thoughts, ideas, or ſentiments; and in the conſequences thence deduced; which conſequences are likewiſe the perception of our own thoughts, as hath been obſerved (N°. 41.) The demonſtrations of Geometry are therefore ſaid to have a metaphyſical evidence, becauſe they are nothing but the perception of our ideas, and of their reciprocal fitneſs and connection.

But, as the exiſtence of a being really diſtinct from us is a thing different from the intimate perception of our own thoughts or ideas, it cannot be proved by a *metaphyſical evidence* taken in that ſenſe; becauſe that evidence, by its definition, is no more than the perception of our own thoughts or ſentiments, which demonſtrate only what is within us, and nothing extraneous; otherwiſe our own perceptions, that are nothing

but

but ourſelves, would be at the ſame time a thing different from ourſelves; which is incomprehenſible.

49. Error of Geometricians.

Some Geometricians are led into a palpable error, in imagining that things demonſtrated by Geometry, exiſt, out of their thought, exactly ſimilar to the demonſtration formed of them in their mind. They muſt be quickly ſenſible of their miſtake, if they will but reflect a moment on the perfect globe, the imaginary properties of which are demonſtrated in Geometry, though the thing itſelf has no real exiſtence in nature. Geometry ſhews nothing of the exiſtence of things, but only what they are, ſuppoſing them to exiſt really ſuch as they are conceived by the mind. And indeed, were all created things exiſting annihilated, Geometry would not loſe a ſingle point of its demonſtrations; the circle would ſtill remain a round figure, of which all the points of circumference would be equally diſtant from the centre.

50. Whether there are any metaphyſical proofs of the exiſtence of God.

It is then certain that, by a metaphyſical evidence, taken in the ſenſe recently mentioned, we can only demonſtrate what is inherent in ourſelves, and nothing of the exiſtence of things of a different nature. Wherefore, unleſs we ſuppoſe God and ourſelves to be the ſame being, it will be impoſſible, in the ſenſe we mention, to find a metaphyſical demonſtration of the exiſtence of God,

PART I.

God, and conſequently it will be uſeleſs to ſeek it; for no truth whatever, with reſpect to an object different from our ideas and internal perception, is ſuſceptible of that kind of evidence. The thing however will not be the leſs really evident on that account, ſince nature has placed in us other principles of evidence, which we cannot diſavow without renouncing common ſenſe, and the ſentiments Nature has dictated to all mankind.

CHAPTER VII.

A new explanation, with examples of the qualities eſſential to firſt truths.

51. Nature of firſt truths. 1ſt. They cannot be proved.

AS the ground-work of this treatiſe is the knowledge of firſt truths, we cannot be too careful in aſcertaining their eſſential qualities, which we ſhall endeavour to make more ſenſible by the aſſiſtance of examples. The firſt of thoſe qualities is, to be ſo clear, that, if we attempt to defend or attack them, it cannot be done but by propoſitions which manifeſtly are neither more clear, nor more certain.

52. They are admitted in all countries, and at all times.

2. They are ſo univerſally received amongſt men, in all times and countries, and by all degrees of capacity, that thoſe who attack them are, comparatively to the reſt of mankind, manifeſtly

leſs

leſs than one to a hundred, or even a thouſand.

53. They are practically followed by all.

3. They are ſo ſtrongly imprinted in our minds, that we regulate our conduct by them, notwithſtanding all the ſpeculative refinements of thoſe who imagine contrary opinions, and who even act themſelves conformably, not to their own imaginary notions, but to thoſe very firſt truths that are univerſally received.

54. Application of thoſe rules to the certainty of bodies.

By thoſe three qualities, it is eaſy to evince the propoſitions that ſhould be conſidered as firſt truths. If, in fact, a man, for example, ſhould attempt to queſtion the certainty of the exiſtence of bodies, by what more certain propoſition will he be able to prove any thing for, or againſt this truth?—Will he ſay on the one hand, in order to prove it, that God has given me an idea of it, and, if that idea were not true, God muſt deceive me? But this argument contains three or four propoſitions, each of which moſt aſſuredly is neither more clear, nor more immediately obvious to my mind, than this truth, *there are bodies.* On the contrary, St. Paul, to whom the true proofs of the exiſtence of God were much better known than to our philoſophers, tells us *that inviſible Being is conceived by viſible things.* Viſible things are therefore known to us before an inviſible God; and viſible things are bodies: the knowledge we

PART I. have then of bodies, is preſent to our minds, previous even to the knowledge of God.

Certain philoſophers, it is true, inſiſt on a proof of the exiſtence of God, which does not ſuppoſe any viſible objects: I have, ſay they, an idea of God naturally; therefore God exiſts. But whom ſhall they be able to convince that this propoſition, *I have naturally an idea of God*, or this other, *If I have naturally an idea of God, God exiſts*—whom, I ſay, will they be able to convince that either of theſe two propoſitions is more clear, more certain, and more immediately obvious to my mind, than this, *there are bodies?*

Their exiſtence as certain as any other, 55. On the other hand, what propoſition more certain, or more clear, can be conceived, to attack this, *there are bodies?* Will this be of any force, *We are evidently certain of nothing but the internal ſentiment of our own perception?* But we have obſerved, that this propoſition would lead to fanaticiſm; as, by admitting it in all its latitude, each of us might rationally doubt whether any other being exiſted beſides ourſelves. Will this other propoſition anſwer the purpoſe; *I might abſolutely experience all that I do, without the exiſtence of bodies?* This propoſition is far from being more certain and clear, as the pretended *poſſibility* it includes has no place in the natural ſentiment, but only finds admiſſion with certain ſpeculative minds, who

who carry their ſpeculations beyond the juſt limits. Were ſuch a *poſſibility* indeed founded on common ſenſe, we might reaſonably judge that all we actually experience does not ſuppoſe bodies, and conſequently entertain a rational doubt of their exiſtence; nor ſhould we act irrationally in regulating the conduct of our lives in conformity to ſuch a doubt. Let me aſk then, whether it is a mark of common ſenſe, to be reſtrained in the conduct of life by an uncertainty of the exiſtence of bodies? As this uncertainty is a manifeſt folly, the contrary certainty muſt be wiſdom and truth united. To this we muſt adhere, unleſs we would confound the moſt certain ideas of the human mind, and adopt vain refinements in the place of true philoſophy. CHAP. VII.

But in ſleep, or a delirium, do we not feel nearly the ſame impreſſions which we uſually experience by the means of bodies? Perhaps they may be nearly the ſame; but moſt undoubtedly they are not the ſame: and, if a perſon awake ſhould not find himſelf quite differently affected from what he is when dreaming, he would be as little worthy of any rational attention, as if he were actually in a delirium or profound ſleep. Beſides, if in theſe two conditions we feel impreſſions reſembling thoſe that are commonly made on us by bodies, it is only becauſe we before received thoſe impreſſions from the bodies

PART I.

themſelves, and they are then renewed by the agitation of the ſpirits. As thoſe two conditions therefore neceſſarily ſuppoſe bodies, they ſhew their exiſtence, inſtead of demonſtrating that *I might experience all that I do, without the exiſtence of bodies:* for, if there were no bodies what ſhould I experience, or what indeed could I experience? I neither know, nor can know, not having any experience of the matter; and I cannot, independently of that, penetrate into the nature of ſpirits; and thoſe who ſhould preſume to penetrate further would only plunge into chimeras. No contrary propoſition then is more certain and more clear than this, *there are bodies:* it is therefore a firſt truth ſuggeſted to our minds by Nature and common ſenſe; for, in attempting either to prove or deſtroy it, we cannot produce a propoſition more clear, or more evident.

56. having the qualities of firſt truths.

We may add, that this truth is likewiſe poſſeſſed of the two laſt qualities which eſſentially accompany firſt truths; for it has been ſo univerſally received among mankind, in all ages and countries of the world, and by capacities of every degree, that thoſe who ſhould attack the evident certainty of the exiſtence of bodies would not be found as one to a hundred; nay, not as one to a thouſand, or even to a hundred thouſand: for all men, as we ſhall not ſcruple to declare, being philoſophers with reſpect to firſt truths,

truths, in a hundred thouſand philoſophers moſt aſſuredly one cannot be found to judge ſeriouſly, *that he is not evidently certain whether there are bodies in the world*; and whether the objects he has every where before his eyes may not be ſpectres, or mere phantoms of the imagination.

57. Reflections that are contrary to thoſe rules, are alſo contrary to common ſenſe.

In the buſineſs of life, a number ſtill leſs will be found to act as if they were not evidently certain of what we would ſuppoſe might admit of a doubt. When, therefore, notwithſtanding thoſe three qualities of firſt truths, any ſpeculative refiner ſhall pretend, that, by the power of reflection, he has diſcovered that we have no evident certainty of the exiſtence of bodies, he will only prove, that by the power of reflection he has loſt all title to common ſenſe; as he diſavows a firſt truth, dictated by the ſentiments of Nature, and confirmed by the three qualities I have explained.

58. Thoſe rules ſhew the free-agency of man.

That which relates to the free-agency of man has likewiſe thoſe three qualities. And, in fact, 1ſt, No opinion has ever been more univerſal among mankind. Is not that, ſaid St. Auguſtine, what the moſt able profeſſors inculcate in their inſtructions, what is equally proclaimed in the plains and cottages of the moſt ſimple ſhepherds, and repeated and ſuppoſed in every circumſtance of civil ſociety?

PART I.

2dly. If a few, by an affected ſingularity, or a ſort of extravagant reflections, have attempted to maintain or imagine the contrary, does not their own conduct itſelf ſhew us the fallacy of their words, ſince they cannot have the ſame reſpect or eſteem for perfidy as they have for fidelity? Thoſe qualities, however, ſtrictly ſpeaking, would neither be eſtimable nor contemptible, were they to proceed from a principle of neceſſity, and not be the effects of free-will. We might like virtue and probity, as things convenient to us; but we could never conſider them worthy of recompenſe and eſteem. It is thus we like a watch, for the conveniency it affords in regularly marking the hours; and we cannot ſeriouſly think it worthy of eſteem and reward, as we do a man who, on the moſt trying occaſions, remains faithful to his duty.

59. They cannot be attacked by a propoſition more clear.

Beſides, what propoſition, more clear and certain than this, *Man is truely free*, can be advanced in oppoſition to that truth? Can it be attacked by the following, *We might not be free, and make a voluntary choice ſometimes of one thing, and ſometimes of another, without perceiving it ourſelves, and without experiencing any diſpoſition different from that in which we actually are?* This propoſition, I maintain, is not certainly more clear than that of, *I am ſenſible that I am free*; for, by the way of argument, the one cannot be deſtroyed

deſtroyed by the other, as they have no common principle between them, which may help to deſtroy the one and eſtabliſh the other; whereas, in regard to ſentiment, all men of ſenſe and veracity are ſo far from being reſtrained by the ſubtle arguments of a philoſopher on the ſubject, that the more they ſhall reflect on the matter, the more they will laugh at the ſophiſtry of the philoſopher.

Again, will any perſon imagine that this truth, *I am free*, may be attacked by a propoſition more clear, in the ſtrength of the following argument, on which ſome people ſeem to lay a conſiderable ſtreſs: *As man always neceſſarily inclines his will to what he judges the beſt, he cannot incline it to what he judges not to be ſo good?* But this ſecond propoſition, far from being ſo clear and certain as the firſt, is a perpetual ſource of diſcuſſions and enquiries among men of the moſt ſubtle capacity.

All muſt readily allow, that the will, at leaſt ſometimes, is inclined to one object rather than to another, though one be not better than the other; as when of two guineas it takes one rather than the other, without perceiving any cauſe of preference in either. The mind will again be puzzled to diſtinguiſh a *better* that is preſent and leſs durable, from a *better* that is to come and more laſting; a *better* according to the ſenſes, from a *better* according to reaſon; a

PART I.

better independent of the action of free-will, from a *better* that is always found in the action itſelf of the will, which actually exerciſes its freedom: ſo that the will is always found to follow what is beſt as to itſelf; becauſe the will itſelf makes the beſt by its own choice, in inclining to what pleaſes it moſt, but which is better for no other reaſon but becauſe it is pleaſed to prefer it to any other object.

60. The three qualities of firſt truths united to ſupport this.

Whatever, therefore, may be advanced in oppoſition to the judgement of mankind, with reſpect to the free-agency of man, it will not be a principle more clear, more plauſible, more intereſting and natural to the human mind, than the ſentiment of liberty or free-will. This moreover is found diffuſed among all men, in every age and country of the world. All men, in the conduct of life, act in conformity to this opinion: it is therefore a firſt truth, becauſe it poſſeſſes the three eſſential qualities of one. Wherever then thoſe three qualities are found united, there we ſhall infallibly find ſo many firſt truths dictated by common ſenſe, and by the very ſentiments of Nature.

With regard to that ſpecies of firſt truths which *enables us to judge that mere chance could never form a work ſuch as the world in general, the human body in particular, or even a watch that regularly marks the hours*, ſome philoſophers pretend that

that this judgement is far from being an inconteſtable truth, and conſequently from being a firſt truth. They reaſon thus:

61. Particular objection with regard to the effects of chance.

Nature, ſay they, teaches us, that in an infinite number of poſſible combinations is contained the particular combination of parts; whence reſults the formation of the world, of the human body, or of a watch: it is not therefore impoſſible but this combination may have been effected by chance, ſince it is as poſſible as any other combination that chance might have effectually produced.

I anſwer, It is by no means true that Nature leaves us to judge that, without the aſſiſtance of any intelligence, and by mere chance alone, one of the preceding combinations is poſſible: it is not, I ſay, Nature that leads us to ſuch a judgement, but the wanton efforts of a giddy imagination, that perplexes itſelf unreaſonably with objects in which the mind loſes itſelf, and which are evidently beyond the reach of our limited capacity. 1ſt. What preciſe idea have we in the word *chance?* None; unleſs it be that chance is an unknown cauſe: and to judge of the effects that may be produced by an unknown cauſe, is to judge of a chimera. 2dly. To judge, moreover, of what is or is not poſſible in an *infinite combination* (which, by its very infinity, ſurpaſſes the reach of our underſtanding) is another chimera,

as

PART I.

as we ſhall make more fully appear in the chapter of *infinity*, or of *the poſſibility of beings*. But what is manifeſtly within the reach of our capacity? It is that which Nature has placed in the minds of all men who have not laboured to give the lye to her ſentiments: ſhe informs them that a machine like that of the world in general, of a human body in particular, or only of a clock or watch, is a combination which it is impoſſible ſeriouſly to attribute to any other cauſe but ſome intelligence; ſo that it is impoſſible for me to ſuppoſe that a ſenſible man thinks otherwiſe than I do of thoſe matters.

62. Common ſenſe ought to decide between philoſophers.

Should it be urged, after this ſtate of the queſtion, that a philoſopher ſeriouſly thinks poſſible what is conſidered by me as impoſſible, I inſiſt, that in this particular he overleaps the bounds of reaſon. In ſuch a contrariety of opinions, what judge is to decide whether the character of a ſenſible man belongs to the philoſopher, or to me? I am perſuaded that I ſhall be juſtified by the ſentiments of all mankind, except a very few, who loſe and perplex themſelves in endeavouring to find a poſſibility where the reſt of mankind can diſcern none. It is therefore the buſineſs of the philoſopher to prove to me, that rational nature reſides only in him, and a few of the ſame ſtamp, whilſt it is unknown to all the reſt of mankind. He advances ſubtle arguments; but

but thoſe arguments, after they have been conſidered with all the attention he requires, have not the leaſt effect upon the minds of others: they only ſerve to convince us more fully, that there is in rational nature ſomething more ſenſible than extravagant arguments carried beyond the ſentiment of Nature; a ſentiment common to all, which tells us, that firſt principles, or firſt truths, cannot be attacked by propoſitions more clear and more convincing than they are themſelves. This ſhall be further confirmed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

That the certainty of firſt truths is not weakened by thoſe ſubtle arguments with which ſome people attempt to oppoſe them.

63. Doubts, with reſpect to things evident, only ſhew that the mind is limited.

WITH reſpect to the ſubject here treated of, certain objections have been propoſed, ſimilar to thoſe already taken notice of, and which have appeared difficult to be explained: as they relate, however, to points that cannot be ſeriouſly doubted, they only ſhew the limits of the human capacity, and the weakneſs of our imagination, but do not in the leaſt alter the truth of what I have laid down. Numbers of argu-

PART I. arguments are propoſed, that confound ours, and ſtill neither make, nor ſhould make, any impreſſion on common ſenſe; becauſe they are illuſions, the falſehood of which may be readily diſcovered by the unerring ſentiment of Nature, though it cannot always be demonſtrated by a regular analyſis of our thoughts. The reaſon of this has been already hinted, and is as follows: Similar difficulties always include ſome part of the idea of *infinite*, in which our minds are, and naturally muſt be, loſt: therefore, nothing is more rational than to acknowledge our ignorance of ſuch matters; as nothing is more ridiculous than the vain confidence of certain men, who affect a kind of triumph becauſe we can make no reply to objections which we muſt, if we are rational men, conſider as incomprehenſible to our underſtanding. Thus, no perſon has ever yet been able, with clearneſs and preciſion, to anſwer the trite argument made uſe of to prove that, as the ſpace of a foot is compoſed of parts which may be reckoned infinite, it would require infinite time to compute thoſe parts. We have, in the receſſes of our mind, a certain diſpoſition of ſentiment and experience, that enables us to form an evident judgement with reſpect to this matter, notwithſtanding all the ſophiſtical arguments that might ſeem capable of ſuſpending it: a thing therefore does not remain leſs evident becauſe

becauſe it is oppoſed by perplexing difficulties, and diſputed by ſome philoſophers.

64. The difficulties of ſceptics have made no impreſſion.

Sceptics have diſputed all knowledge, and rejected every certainty whatever, even that of our exiſtence. Should we therefore doubt whether we exiſt, think, or have any idea of pleaſure or pain? Should we doubt of any other truths, equally evident, becauſe thoſe philoſophers are pleaſed to make puzzling and frivolous objections? What ſhould we ſay to a perſon who would attempt to prove that we do not exiſt, becauſe it is impoſſible for us to conceive the origin of our exiſtence? Such, however, are nearly the arguments of ſome modern philoſophers againſt thoſe truths that are moſt ſtrongly aſſerted by common ſenſe.

65. The anſwer ſuggeſted by common ſenſe againſt certain philoſophers.

I find it diſputed, whether I am evidently certain of the exiſtence of other beings beſides myſelf; whether I am ſurrounded by bodies; whether a clock that ſhews the hours regularly, or whether the machine of the univerſe, or that of each of the animals that ſubſiſt in it, might not have been the work of chance; whether all men might not deceive me in things which they unanimouſly relate; whether I have not exiſted as I am for a long ſucceſſion of ages, of which I may have loſt the remembrance. I ſee theſe points debated by philoſophers: yet, however great they may be as philoſophers, after they have

PART I. have ſtated and ſupported the reaſon of their doubts, I ſometimes ſay within myſelf, that I am at a loſs how to anſwer their ſophiſtical refinements; but that I have ſeen men ſhut up as lunatics for leſs extravagant notions.

I enquire among other men of different ages, countries, and conſtitutions; and I find them all equally perſuaded, that no rational man can ſeriouſly form the doubts I have related. I conſult the conduct and actions of all men, and even of thoſe whoſe arguments ſeem to oppoſe the opinion of mankind; and I do not diſcover one who has ever been reſtrained, in the moſt important affairs, by any doubt of the exiſtence of other beings beſide himſelf; of his having a body, or not; or whether we might believe a man who ſhould relate that, in a certain country, he had ſeen a watch formed by the mere effect of chance. I ſee no people in the world who think or act according to the opinions of this ſingular ſpecies of philoſophers: I cannot therefore believe that they aſſert them ſeriouſly, but merely for the pleaſure of advancing new ſubtleties, and affording freſh amuſement to the wits of the age; for, after their arguments have been examined and made known, the ſentiments of mankind were not changed in that particular.

All

All men however, at leaſt with reſpect to ſome firſt principles, are as much philoſophers, and as much to be credited, as either Plato, Des Cartes, or Locke; for there is then no occaſion for argument: the buſineſs is, only to be convinced of a ſimple matter of fact, that is, of the neceſſity they naturally experience of judging clearly ſuch a thing on ſuch a ſubject; that there exiſt, for example, other beings beſide me.

66. All are philoſophers with reſpect to firſt truths.

Ariſtotle, with all his reaſoning and philoſophy, is not more perfectly convinced that he exiſts and thinks, than a man of the moſt common and ſimple underſtanding; neither is he more firmly perſuaded that he is not the only being in the world, &c. In thoſe matters, where knowledge acquired by reaſon and argument is neceſſary, and where particular reflections, that ſuppoſe experiments not made by every perſon, are required, a philoſopher is more to be credited than another man; but in an affair of manifeſt experience, and of a ſentiment immediately obvious to the firſt motions of the ſoul, and common to all mankind, all men in this reſpect become philoſophers; or their evidence, with regard to the truth, is at leaſt as well founded as if they were ſuch in reality: ſo that, as to the firſt principles of Nature and common ſenſe, when a philoſopher is oppoſed to the reſt

67. There is no need of argument.

of

PART I.

of mankind, he is a philoſopher oppoſed to a hundred thouſand other philoſophers, becauſe they are as fully perſuaded as he is of the firſt principles of our knowledge.

68. Some philoſophers are, in certain articles, leſs to be believed than the people.

I ſay further, that the common race of mankind is more to be credited in thoſe points than many philoſophers, becauſe the former have not endeavoured to ſtrain or diſtort the ſentiments and opinions with which Nature univerſally inſpires all men.

69. The attention which the common ſentiment of nature deſerves.

Every philoſopher ſhould therefore maturely conſider the ſtrength of the ſentiment of Nature; in order to make it the baſis and general teſt of every truth; for it is equally impoſſible, either to judge that the ſentiment of Nature is contrary to any rule of truth, or that any rule of truth has not the ſentiment of Nature itſelf for its origin and foundation.

70. Firſt truths have not an equal degree of force in the evidence.

Though, of the different kinds of firſt truths, ſome are of an evidence either a little more or leſs powerful with us than others, this however does not prevent their being all really evident, as they are ſufficiently clear to determine our reaſon, naturally, infallibly and neceſſarily to particular opinions, with regard to particular matters, which are within the reach of all human capacity.

In

In fact, as the firſt rule of truth univerſally acknowledged by all, that is, the internal ſentiment of our own perception, derives all its force from Nature; wherever the ſentiment of Nature is found, there alſo will be found a true evidence and a neceſſary rule of truth; ſo that, though a greater degree of light will make a truth more obvious and ſtriking, it will not, however, make it more certain.

71. The ſentiment of Nature is their ſource.

It is therefore Nature, and the ſentiment of Nature, that we muſt acknowledge to be the ſource and origin of all true principles; whether they are accompanied by a greater or leſs degree of light: for, to imagine that Nature conducts us right when ſhe holds out a ſtronger light to us, but that ſhe may lead us wrong when ſhe determines us to a judgement the evidence of which is leſs ſtriking, would be to ſuſpect that ſhe might lead us to falſehood one way or another; and we ſhould neither know what we are ourſelves, what we think, nor what we ought to think.

PART I.

CHAPTER IX.

Why common ſenſe is not equally found in all men.

72. Common ſenſe degenerates in ſome.

AS Nature has made all men what they are, we might ſuppoſe that they ſhould all poſſeſs an equal portion of common ſenſe: in ſome, however, we find it obſcured, disfigured, contradicted, and entirely, or at leaſt conſiderably, degenerated. The ſentiment of Nature that enables us to think and judge, may be compared to the ſentiment that prompts us to love and deſire. Is it not a natural ſentiment that inſpires parents with an affection for their children, and urges them to promote their welfare? I never yet knew any perſon that doubted this: nevertheleſs, this natural ſentiment is altered or extinguiſhed in ſome parents; but this does not prevent it from being a ſentiment of Nature. In like manner, though we ſhould find ſome perſons to have notions different, with reſpect to firſt truths, from all the reſt of mankind, this is no proof that the ideas of the latter are not ſentiments inſpired by Truth and Nature.

73. Nature ſometimes forms monſters.

Though Nature is regular in her works, men, however, may be found defective or imperfect in ſome

ſome things: and as, in the external ſtructure or form, abortions and monſters ſometimes appear; the ſame may be likewiſe ſeen in the diſpoſitions of the mind.

74. Some men make monſters of themſelves.

We muſt not however imagine, that Nature alone forms thoſe monſters or abortions with reſpect to the diſpoſitions of the ſoul: there is greater reaſon to believe that men diſfigure themſelves, by effacing the impreſſions of Nature, and obſcuring the lights ſhe has placed in them, and this through an abuſe of the liberty ſhe likewiſe beſtows upon them.

75. Various cauſes of this diſorder.

This may, and does actually happen by various means. Sometimes extravagant curioſity prompts us to the purſuit of things that are beyond the reach of our capacity and talents, and we plunge into errors and darkneſs: at other times, inſpired by the ridiculous vanity of diſtinguiſhing ourſelves from other men, we deviate from their opinions in things of which they are naturally as capable of judging as we are; ſo that, by renouncing their ſentiments, we at the ſame time abandon common ſenſe. On ſome occaſions we are led away by the prejudice of a faction or ſect, that prevails for a while in ſome countries; as hath been the caſe with the Sceptics and Platonics, who, intoxicated with the notion of being the ſuperior wits of the age, boaſted that they alone could comprehend what is in reality incomprehen-

PART I. ſible to every rational mind: they looked down with pity on the reſt of mankind, whilſt thoſe, on the other hand, more juſtly lamented their illuſions. On another occaſion, dazzled by a long and pompous train of conſequential truths, we are blind to the falſehood of our own principle. Sometimes, in fine, a ſecret intereſt influences us to confound and disfigure the ſentiments of Nature, in order to free ourſelves from the troubleſome ſuggeſtions of certain truths; for, in ſhort, ſuch is the imperious aſcendant of the will in the mind, that it can ſubſtitute the moſt unaccountable ſentiments in the place of the beſt eſtabliſhed and moſt plauſible knowledge.

We muſt therefore ſuppoſe, that the Author of Nature has imprinted on the minds of all men whatever is neceſſary for the attainment of truth, as far as it is conſiſtent with their nature; but, having given them free-will, on the other hand, they have ſo much abuſed that privilege by various exceſſes, that they have changed the order of their conſtitution, and vitiated the organs of their ſenſes. Experience indeed ſhews us, that on thoſe depend the various operations of the mind, and conſequently the accuracy and perfection of our judgement. It is thus, probably, that men have, in a manner, belied their nature, more or leſs, ſome one way, and ſome another: hence have proceeded extravagant notions, idle prejudices,

dices, falſe views, errors of the mind, and all the various injuries that common ſenſe has ſuffered in each of us.

76. Various names given to the various alterations of common ſenſe.

Thoſe in whom common ſenſe is entirely altered, are ſuch as we call *abſolute fools*; thoſe in whom it has ſuffered but little alteration in things of trifling conſequence, are perfect, or *men of ſenſe*; thoſe in whom it is changed with reſpect to ſome particular cuſtoms generally eſtabliſhed, conſtitute the characters that have been for ſome time ſtyled *originals*; thoſe in whom it is remarkably altered in regard to ſome particular points, are ſuch of whom we ſay, *they are madmen in that particular:* and we ſay right; for, were they the ſame in every thing elſe, they would be in a perfect ſtate of inſanity.

77. They are to be found accompanied by good qualities.

Nothing, however, is more common than ſuch characters; and, what is very mortifying to humanity, we often meet with them in men otherwiſe poſſeſſed of eminent qualities: ſo that experience daily ſhews us a ſpecies of fool that is a man of genius, another very learned, and others more frequently who are the beſt natured men in the world.

It is not improper to obſerve, that, in the midſt of all the various follies, and alterations of truth and common ſenſe, we rarely find two errors exactly ſimilar; unleſs in ſome particular perſon,

PART I.

who through affectation or contagion adopts or contracts the error of another.

78. The human mind always preſerves principles of truth.

But, in this infinite diverſity of errors and diſorders in common ſenſe, from whatever cauſes they may have proceeded, (which I do not undertake to examine or prove, as ſyſtems are of no weight with ſolid minds) experience however ſhews us that principles, or firſt truths, remain in the minds of all men. But how are they to be known? They are apparent when we ſee great numbers, of various ages, tempers, conditions and countries, coincide in one opinion with regard to a thing of which they are all equally capable of judging.

I may fairly conclude, that I am a better judge, and think more juſtly, than others who are of a different opinion from me with reſpect to matters of which they have had much leſs experience than I; but, where the advantages are equal on both ſides, it is impoſſible that a man ſhould be right in his opinion, when a hundred others, who are equally capable of judging, think differently of the matter. This rule is the more infallible, as the ſubject to be decided depends leſs upon argument, and approaches nearer to firſt principles and the knowledge common to all mankind.

CHAPTER X.

An elucidation of ſome difficulties that might remain with reſpect to the ſpecies of Firſt Truths which are derived from common ſenſe.

THE difficulties that might remain with regard to what has been advanced, are confined to two or three.

79. Error with reſpect to the dimenſions of the ſun.

1. The common opinion of mankind in general is, that the ſun is no more than two feet in diameter; ſo that, had they been left to themſelves, or had not Philoſophy undeceived them, all men would conclude thoſe to be the true dimenſions of the ſun.

We anſwer, It is not true that the common opinion of thoſe who are capable of judging of the ſun's dimenſions is, that it is no more than two or three feet diameter. The moſt ignorant people are guided, in this matter, by the major part, or the whole body, of philoſophers and aſtronomers, rather than by the teſtimony of their own eyes: and, indeed, we have never known any perſon, even among thoſe of the loweſt ſtation, ſeriouſly maintain that it was wrong to imagine the ſun larger than a globe of four feet diameter. But, ſhould any one be found ſo ig-

PART I.

norant as to conteſt this point, the diſpute might be terminated in a moment by a ſimple experiment; it would be ſufficient to direct the eyes of the opponent to a common object, which appears greater or leſs, in proportion to the diſtance it is from the ſight. The moſt ſtupid men, therefore, are convinced their eyes deceive them with regard to the true dimenſions of objects; ſo that, while they judge, without reflection, that the ſun is four feet in diameter, they are all ready, on the leaſt reflection, to conclude that their firſt judgement is ſubject to error. This firſt judgement, therefore, is not a ſentiment of Nature: on the contrary, it is univerſally oppoſed by the pureſt ſentiment of rational nature, which is that of reflection. This anſwer may ſuffice for all the difficulties that may be drawn from popular errors, which are manifeſtly contradicted by the evidence of reflection, reaſon, or experience.

80. Whether truth is calculated for the bulk of the people.

2. It is a maxim with men of ſuperior wiſdom, and as it were a firſt truth in morality, *That truth is not calculated for the multitude:* it does not therefore appear judicious to eſtabliſh a rule of truth on what is conſidered as true by the majority of mankind.

81. All maxims ſubject to exceptions.

I anſwer, That a preciſe and metaphyſical truth is not to be governed by common maxims, the truth of which is liable to different exceptions.

We

We have an inſtance of this in the maxim which declares that *the voice of the people is the voice of God:* this is far from being univerſally true, though it is nearly as often verified as that here objected, that *the truth is not calculated for the multitude:* and with regard to Firſt Truths, the ſubject here treated of, the latter maxim ſhould be conſidered as abſolutely falſe.

82. Were the firſt truths not known to all, we ſhould agree about nothing.

In fact, if firſt truths were not univerſally diffuſed in the minds of all men, it would be impoſſible to make them agree in any thing, as they would have different principles in all matters: ſo that their moſt juſt and candid arguments would only ſerve to foment a ſpirit of falſehood, lying, miſunderſtanding, and contradiction, among them, as they muſt be guided by falſe principles. When, therefore, it is a juſt ſaying, that *truth is not for the multitude*, it means a ſpecies of truth which cannot be well known without ſtudy, capacity, and experience: and thoſe are circumſtances not ſuitable to the multitude; neither have they any occaſion for them in the diſcovery of firſt truths, which always carry full conviction to the generality of minds, whether learned or ignorant; for, to be convinced of them, there is no occaſion for any argument; to think only, is ſufficient.

PART I.

83. The difficulty of diſcovering an univerſal opinion.

3. It is objected, that the common or univerſal ſentiment, though it ſhould be an infallible rule of truth, would however be uſeleſs in practice, on account of the difficulty or impoſſibility of knowing which is the greater number; as nobody is capable of viſiting the whole univerſe, and aſcertaining the opinion of each man in particular upon the ſame ſubject, in order to be convinced whether they think alike.

84. How this may be diſcovered.

I anſwer, that with regard to firſt truths, or firſt principles, if we can ſeriouſly doubt whether they are admitted by the majority, we may alſo rationally doubt whether it is a firſt principle, or a firſt truth. Secondly, When a truth appears to us a firſt truth, it is ſo in fact, if we ſee it received as ſuch without being contradicted, or without having been oppoſed, ſo as to perſuade the majority to alter their ſentiments. Thirdly, The common ſentiment of nature, which is a firſt rule of truth, wants not to be confirmed by conſulting the opinion of each individual: it is verified in itſelf, becauſe it is evident and to be found in every man; ſo that, if ſome have ventured to diſpute it, they have been contradicted by numbers incomparably greater.

The beſt anſwer, however, that can be made to this third objection, is the ſentiment of Nature itſelf on the matter; and whoever refuſes to ſubmit to that, previouſly contradicts

the

the common ſentiment diffuſed among all men. In fact, what could be ſaid to a man who, on the pretence of not having ſeen all mankind, ſhould imagine that there are ſome perhaps who do not wiſh to be happy, and who can live without either eating or drinking? The difficulty would carry the anſwer with it, or rather excuſe us from giving any.

CHAPTER XI.

Whether the common metaphyſical axioms are firſt truths, and of what nature.

85. Common axioms are not principles of every truth,

CERTAIN common axioms are uſually given as general principles of truth: for example, *two and two make four*; or, *the whole is greater than a part*; or, *it is impoſſible that a thing ſhould at the ſame time be and not be.* I ſhall not, at preſent, examine whether theſe are firſt truths in the ſenſe of being the firſt that occur to the mind. I muſt however obſerve, that theſe axioms are not principles of every truth, as they do not help to prove any external truth; that is, the certain and true exiſtence of any thing diſtinct from us. Theſe axioms, therefore, are only internal truths; that is to ſay, a mere conformity of ideas founded

on

PART I.

on this principle; *ſuch a thing is ſuch a thing*, or *ſuch an idea is that idea, and no other.*

86. but of internal truths only.

In fact, this truth or propoſition, *two and two make four*, gives us no knowledge of any object diſtinct from our minds; and, were there but one man in the world, it would be always true that two and two make four: for this very propoſition, *two and two are four*, tells us nothing, in fact, but that, when the idea of *two* is repeated, or taken twice, we give it the name of *four*: ſo that *four* is only *two taken twice*, as *two* is nothing elſe but *one taken twice*; which is not really, in any reſpect, a firſt external truth that ſhews the conformity of our thought with any object diſtinct from our actual thought, but only the ſame thought, or idea, which, being taken twice, has received a new name, for the conveniency of the language; for to ſay *two and two make four*, is ſaying no more than that *two taken twice* is *two taken twice*, which is what is called *four*.

In like manner, to ſay that *the whole is greater than a part*, is likewiſe *but an internal truth*; for a whole is a greater quantity conceived, in which we diſtinguiſh many leſſer quantities, termed *parts*. To ſay, therefore, *the whole is greater than any of its parts*, is only ſaying that *a greater quantity is a greater quantity, and not another quantity that is leſs*; or, *ſuch an idea is ſuch an idea, and no other*. This plainly ſhews the nature of thoſe kinds

kinds of firſt principles, which are, ſtrictly ſpeaking, nothing but logical or internal truths, and mere connections of ideas; but ſuch as point out no truth with reſpect to the exiſtence of things; for thoſe axioms would be equally true, though nothing exiſted diſtinct from us. Did we know more than thoſe abſtracted truths, we ſhould poſſeſs no other but abſtracted knowledge, and connections of ideas, ſuch as the ſcience and demonſtrations of Geometry. (49, 50.)

87. Every ſubject has truths demonſtrated as thoſe in Geometry.

This may ſerve to ſhew the fallacy of a maxim frequently advanced by ſome men eſteemed for their depth and penetration: they ſay, *that there is no truth but in Geometry.* It is plain that thoſe very profound minds are loſt in their profundity, and do not well underſtand themſelves. In fact, as demonſtrations of Geometry are nothing but internal truths, that is, connections of ideas; it is manifeſtly falſe, that thoſe connections of ideas are no where elſe to be found but in objects or ſubjects of Geometry. Similar and equally evident may be diſcovered with reſpect to every ſubject within the reach of the human mind, and of which we have clear ideas.

Knowledge may be alſo acquired with regard to the exiſtence of things diſtinct from us; from which conſequences may be deduced as certain as geometrical demonſtrations.

We

PART I.

88. A thing is not proved by ſhewing that it includes no contradiction.

We may further obſerve how erroneous it is in thoſe who pretend to prove, that a certain object really and truly exiſts diſtinct from us, by ſaying *that no contradiction can be ſhewn* in what they advance relative to the exiſtence of that object. It is indeed enough to inform us, that they have advanced nothing againſt an internal truth, which ſolely conſiſts in ſhewing a juſt connection of ideas; but it is not enough to demonſtrate, that what they have advanced agrees with an external truth; for the exiſtence of an object ſeparate from us, is not proved by a mere conformity of ideas, that are only within ourſelves: it can be proved only by the ſentiment which Nature has placed in all men, or at leaſt in the greater part of them, to enable them to judge of the exiſtence of objects that are equally comprehenſible to them all; ſo that, when we are to judge of an object exiſting ſeparate from us, we cannot be determined but by that *ſentiment*, or by ſome conſequence thence deduced. This does not exclude the teſtimony of the ſenſes: on the contrary, common ſenſe convinces us that the teſtimony of the ſenſes is a rule of external truth in the circumſtances we have related.

89. There is no contradiction in ſaying that we have no certainty of the exiſtence of bodies.

There is, however, no contradiction in ſaying that we have no evident certainty of the exiſtence of bodies: this is no contradiction, I ſay, it is only a folly; becauſe, without denying *that an idea*

idea is that idea, which only conſtitutes the contradiction, we deny the truth of a judgement which nature and common ſenſe dictate to all men: ſo that a Philoſopher who imagines he has attained even to every external truth, becauſe he has formed a long chain of propoſitions and ideas that follow in regular ſucceſſion, and among which there appears no contradiction, unleſs he likewiſe admits for firſt truths thoſe with which nature and common ſenſe inſpire mankind relative to the exiſtence of things, may be aptly called *a ſpecies of fool that is an excellent logician*. Inventors of ſyſtems, conſidered merely as ſuch, are no more than excellent logicians.

CHAPTER XII.

Whether there are no other firſt truths but thoſe of which the idea is common to all men.

90. Two ſorts of firſt external truths.

WE may, I think, diſtinguiſh two ſorts of firſt truths that are external: the one, of which I have been hitherto treating, comprehends the firſt truths that extend to every ſituation and diſpoſition of men in general, who have arrived at the age and uſe of reaſon: the other includes the firſt truths particularly attached to certain

PART I.

certain diſpoſitions or ſituations of life; becauſe they ſuppoſe particular knowledge, experience, or practice, the equal acquiſition of which being once admitted, Nature does not fail to dictate to them all a common opinion with regard to certain objects.

91. A taſte for the arts is a ſort of firſt truth.

Thus in all arts and ſciences a taſte is formed, which is properly *common ſenſe* with reſpect to thoſe objects; as the taſte with regard to ſtyle and criticiſm in claſſical learning; that of deſign and colouring in painting, of ſinging and harmony in muſic, of cadence and a graceful air in dancing, and of penetration and great deſigns in the ſcience of politics and negociation.

92. It is relative, and not abſolute.

As theſe ſorts of firſt truths ſuppoſe particular ſituations in which all men are not concerned, they muſt be admitted but *relatively*, and only with reſpect to ſituations of time, country, and other circumſtances, which always imply ſomething arbitrary.

93. Thoſe ſorts of firſt truths have none that are anterior.

In admitting however theſe obſervations, nothing oppoſes our giving the name of *firſt truths*, in an extenſive ſenſe, though not with exact preciſion, to all opinions which Nature generally ſuggeſts to the greater part of mankind with regard even to particular ſubjects, when thoſe opinions can neither be proved nor attacked by opinions more clear and certain as to the matter in queſtion. On this ſenſe therefore what I have related of the taſte

for

for the arts and ſciences may be conſidered as firſt truths: and ſuch are thoſe I ſhall explain at the end, and in the Fifth Part of this Treatiſe.

It would be uſeleſs, therefore, to attempt to prove that there is a difference of ſtyle in certain compoſitions: it would be, I ſay, uſeleſs to ſeek to prove this to thoſe who have no taſte for ſtyle; or to demonſtrate the juſtneſs of cadence and meaſure to perſons who have no knowledge of dancing or muſic: but by practice in thoſe arts they are qualified to judge of them; and whatever is decided by the majority of them, will infallibly be the true taſte; for, as we are more certain of what is ſeen by many eyes than what is ſeen by one only, we are alſo more ſure of what is pronounced true by many, than what is thought ſo by a ſingle perſon. Therefore, what men moſt commonly think of things of which they are equally qualified to judge, before any arguments are uſed, is properly *common ſenſe*; that is, what the ſentiment of wiſe Nature has made moſt common.

CHAPTER XIII.

Application of the rule of common ſenſe in order to diſcover in what true beauty conſiſts.

A Particular treatiſe has been recently publiſhed on the nature of *the beautiful.* The author has enriched the work with a variety of ingenious and ſubtle reflections: I fear, however, that in ſeveral places he gives, as explanations, things which require to be explained themſelves. What I have to offer on this ſubject, may be, I imagine, more fully verified: but my ideas, in order to be reliſhed, will have occaſion for particular examples, by which they ſhall be followed; and thoſe will make them more intelligible than they might at firſt apppear.

94. In what the beautiful conſiſts.

What is termed *beautiful,* or beauty, ſeems to me to conſiſt in that *which is at the ſame time the moſt common and moſt rare in things of the ſame ſpecies*; or, to expreſs myſelf in another manner, it is *that particular form, the moſt common of all the particular forms to be met with in the ſame ſpecies of things.* This ſort of paradox requires explanation; but the more we examine it, the more it will become plauſible.

As

CHAP. XIII.

As an example of things of the ſame ſpecies, let us take human faces. It is evident that, in this ſpecies, we find a number almoſt infinite of different particular forms, one of which conſtitutes beauty, whilſt the reſt, however numerous they may be, conſtitute what is *not beauty*, but *deformity* or *uglineſs*. I ſay then, that, among the numerous particular forms of deformity, none of them include ſo many faces formed after their model, as there are formed after that particular caſt which conſtitutes beauty: ſo that, in fifty faces, there may be perhaps twelve or fifteen particular different forms, among which there ſhall be but one that conſtitutes beauty; and this is what makes *beauty* the moſt rare form, I mean, with reſpect to ſo many other different forms: but this particular form ſhall have eight or ten different faces formed entirely, or almoſt entirely, after its own model; whereas each of the twelve or fifteen other particular forms ſhall have only two or three faces after its particular model, or perhaps but one, of ſuch deformity: and this again makes beauty the moſt common form.

95. How it is rare and common.

The ſame principle is verified, and becomes perhaps more apparent ſtill, in what conſtitutes the beauty of each part of the face. If we examine the foreheads or noſes of fifty perſons, we ſhall perhaps find ten well-proportioned and

PART I. forty otherwiſe: the ten will appear as if they were formed after the ſame model; whereas, out of the forty that are ill-ſhaped, not above two or three will be found of the ſame form, but almoſt all different models; one ſhall be too long, another too ſhort; one with too great a riſe or hump, another flat; one ſwelling above, another below; one pointed upwards, another ſpreading downwards; one too broad, another too narrow, &c. So that, as I have ſaid, in forty ill-ſhaped foreheads or noſes, we ſhall ſcarcely find any of ſimilar diſproportion, or deformity; whereas, in the ten foreheads or noſes which I ſuppoſe well-ſhaped, the ſame kind of conformity and proportion will appear. In examining alſo the part that conſtitutes a particular deformity, we ſhall find it is what rarely occurs in human faces; and the leſs frequently ſuch a part appears, the greater muſt be the deformity; whereas, the part that forms a beauty is incomparably more common than any particular part whatever which conſtitutes a deformity.

It will be perhaps ſaid, that it would follow from theſe principles, that all beautiful faces muſt reſemble each other, though it is evident that there are different beauties which have no reſemblance. But we muſt obſerve, that, however beautiful a face may be, its parts are never equally and perfectly beautiful: were they all to

be

be ſo, even to the moſt minute, then all fine faces would actually have a reſemblance: and indeed, among all the particular forms, there is not one that makes men reſemble each other more than beauty; and thoſe perſons, whom, from their reſemblance, we are frequently apt to miſtake for one another, approach nearer to the nature of beauty than deformity. People are never known to be miſtaken in diſtinguiſhing between two ugly faces, or deformed perſons. Painters never find it leſs difficult to take a likeneſs than when they are painting perſons that are ugly: and it always proves a more painful taſk to draw very handſome perſons, particularly if they are young; for the complexion being then more delicate and beautiful, and more ſuitable to greater numbers, it is more difficult, in a portrait, to hit off what diſtinguiſhes the one from the other; whereas, by age, faces are lengthened or contracted, withered or wrinkled, a thouſand different ways, in proportion as they fall off from the form of beauty: and thoſe differences which conſtitute uglineſs, leſſen the trouble of painters, and enable them to give a more characteriſtic likeneſs to their portraits.

96. Handſome people reſemble each other more than thoſe that are ugly.

If we ſuppoſe that there are perfect beauties, though of forms entirely different, it will be found, that either the ſuppoſition is falſe, or that thoſe different forms of beauty have always

PART I.

more affinity between them than each of them has with any one of thoſe that conſtitute deformity. Beſides, among thoſe perfect beauties, one will be preferred to the other, only by the part which is, at the ſame time, the moſt common, and moſt rare, in the ſenſe I have mentioned; otherwiſe the preference would be arbitrary, as it happens in different ages and countries. We look upon blue eyes, at preſent, to be the moſt beautiful; black were moſt admired among the Romans: *Spectandum nigris oculis*, "remarkable for fine black eyes," as Horace has it.

97. Whether beauty conſiſts in proportion.

But, in order to illuſtrate the matter more fully, let us examine what is generally ſaid upon the ſubject, when it is aſſerted, that *beauty conſiſts in proportion*. What, I would aſk, is the nature of this proportion? From what ſtandard is it taken? Some perſons imagine they ſolve the difficulty by ſaying, that the proportion which conſtitutes beauty, is drawn from neceſſity, and the uſe for which each part of the body is deſigned. Though there is ſomething ingenious, and perhaps juſt, in this idea, it is however liable to many diſcuſſions and rules that might be found arbitrary. We all allow, for example, that a very large mouth is a blemiſh in the face: I do not however ſee, that it is in any reſpect contrary to the neceſſity and uſe for which the mouth is intended: we ſpeak and eat

at

at leaſt as well with a very large mouth as with a ſmall mouth, or one of middling ſize. CHAP. XIII.

To find, therefore, ſome fixed rule as to what is called *beauty*, we muſt, I imagine, recur to what I have advanced, that beauty conſiſts in the particular form which is moſt common among other particular forms found in things of the ſame ſpecies.

98. Exceſſive uglineſs is what is moſt rare.

We may judge of this from what conſtitutes uglineſs. Nothing is more horrible than a monſter; and yet it is a monſter for no other reaſon, only becauſe it has nothing in common with the human figure and form. By a contrary reaſon, therefore, what is moſt common in the human form and figure, is that which makes beauty; a form and quality the moſt oppoſite to what conſtitutes monſters.

99. Proportion is taken from what is moſt common.

If beauty, moreover, which is generally ſaid to conſiſt in the true proportion of the parts of the face, were not founded on what is moſt common among men, whence could painting and ſculpture have drawn rules of proportion relative to the parts of the body? How could men have conceived, that a forehead ſhould be of ſuch a length, breadth, or prominence, if any other but the juſt proportion were found moſt common? Would not the rules of painting have been merely arbitrary, or rather would they ever have been rules? The ſize or ſtature

PART I.

of a man, to be fine, according to rule, ſhould be of ſuch a height, five feet and a half, for example, or ſix feet: ſo that, ſhould a ſkilful painter be deſired to make the fineſt figure poſſible of a man of a natural ſize, he would not go beyond ſix feet, which I ſuppoſe preſcribed by the rules of his art. Experience indeed will demonſtrate, that of fifty perſons we ſhall find a greater number of the height of ſix feet, or near ſix feet, than of ſeven or eight, five or four. Thus the proportion of the parts of the body is primitively derived from the height or ſtature; ſo that ſuch a height or ſize requires ſuch a length for the face, arms, legs, &c. and deformity will be increaſed, in proportion as it differs from the moſt common ſtandard, and leſſened, the nearer it approaches to the ſame; by which the very rules themſelves muſt be governed.

100. Whether beauty is the form to which we are moſt accuſtomed.

If it be ſaid, that rules would have been always eſtabliſhed according to what is uſually pleaſing to the eye, I anſwer, that what uſually pleaſes the eye is exactly the moſt common and moſt rare form in the ſenſe I have explained it. Should it be added, that true beauty is that which is approved by connoiſſeurs, I would deſire, that mankind may firſt agree who are to be reckoned connoiſſeurs. This will not be ſo eaſily done perhaps: but, when it is once determined, the

the taſte and opinion of connoiſſeurs will be always found in favour of the form we have mentioned; that is, the moſt common among other particular forms. This would incline me to ſuſpect, that the form which conſtitutes beauty is that, in fact, to which our eyes are moſt accuſtomed. Should it be thence concluded, that beauty, at this rate, muſt be, in a great meaſure, arbitrary, I doubt whether ſuch a concluſion would be erroneous: it would, at leaſt, exempt us from ſeeking an eſſential and real character of beauty which we have not yet been able to diſcover.

Beauty is arbitrary.

Whatever may be the ſtate of the matter, if the opinions of mankind ſhould be found nearly divided with regard to an object which one party thought handſome and the other ugly, I would imagine, that there could be no more real beauty, or uglineſs, on one ſide than the other; and that it muſt abſolutely paſs for a beauty relative to the taſte of ſome, but arbitrary in itſelf, and with reſpect to the bulk of mankind.

When all men, therefore, appear divided into thoſe of a fair complexion, and thoſe of a black, and each of the two parties think their own colour the moſt beautiful, without altering their opinion after maturely weighing the matter, and making every obſervation poſſible, we muſt, in that caſe, ſay, that there is not more truth

PART I.

on one ſide than the other, no more real beauty in the faireſt than in the blackeſt complexion, nor in the faces of Europe than thoſe of Africa, unleſs it is a beauty relative to each of the two parties or countries.

102. A face that is handſome in Europe is not ſo in Africa.

What has been ſaid of complexion or colour is naturally applicable to every other particular quality of beauty. On theſe principles, when lips are eſteemed handſome becauſe they are ſmall, or a noſe is thought well-ſhaped becauſe it is neither broad nor flat, we muſt ſay, if we would be juſt in our opinion, Thoſe are fine lips for Europe, but not for Africa, where lips, to be handſome, muſt be extremely thick, and a noſe ſhort, broad, and flat. Should we pretend to ridicule the beauty of the inhabitants of Africa, they, and all the blacks, who are very numerous, will laugh, in their turn, at our ſpecies of beauty; and, in order to decide on which ſide the preference lies, we muſt appeal to the ſenſe of the whole body of mankind.

103. Whether the Blacks have leſs averſion to White people than the latter have to them.

If it were true, as ſome perſons pretend, that the blacks have not the ſame diſlike to a fair complexion as we commonly have to theirs, it would then appear indubitable, that true beauty belongs to Europe and the neighbouring countries; eſpecially as the blacks ſeem to be inferior in number to the whites.

What-

Whatever may be the caſe, if we ſuppoſe that true beauty is to be found in the world, it muſt inconteſtably be that form which is moſt common to all nations; and if particular people, through *prejudice*, and peculiar habits, will not at firſt concur in this opinion, time and reflection muſt at length incline them to the more numerous party, that is, to the ſide and opinion of Reaſon and Nature.

CHAPTER XIV.

Of the teſtimony of our ſenſes, and in what manner it holds the place of a firſt truth.

104. The teſtimony of the ſenſes ſhould be examined.

THOUGH the exerciſe of our ſenſes is ſo familiar to us, that it does not ſeem different from ourſelves, we ſhould not, however, be leſs ſcrupulous in our enquiries with regard to the rules of truth that may be thence drawn, ſince it is the ſubject of maxims which merit the greater degree of inveſtigation, as they ſometimes appear contradictory to one another.

For, on the one hand, when we are willing to give others the greateſt proof that can be expected from us, with regard to the truth of a thing, we ſay, that we have ſeen it with our own eyes;

PART I.

eyes; and, if they ſuppoſe that we have actually ſeen it, they muſt neceſſarily believe it: the teſtimony of the ſenſes is therefore, in this reſpect, a firſt truth, as it holds the place of a firſt principle, no farther enquiry being deſired, or even thought of. This is what is univerſally allowed.

105. The ſenſes are deceitful.

On the other ſide, all likewiſe agree, that the ſenſes are deceitful; and experience will not ſuffer us to doubt it. If we are, however, certain of a thing from our having ſeen it, how can the ſenſe of ſeeing deceive us? or, if it can deceive us, how are we certain of a thing for having ſeen it?

106. General rules are not ſufficient to prevent the error of our ſenſes.

The common anſwer to this difficulty is, that our ſight and other ſenſes may deceive us, when they are not exerciſed with the requiſite conditions; that is, the organ muſt be ſound, and the object at a proper diſtance. When thoſe two rules, or conditions, are implied, they are generally thought ſufficient. This, I think, however, is not ſaying much, or even enough; for where is the uſe of our adducing, as rules that juſtify and evince the teſtimony of our ſenſes, thoſe conditions which we cannot ourſelves ſo far confirm as to know when we have truely found them?

107. We are not certain that they are ſound.

What infallible rule is given to me to judge that the organs of my ſight, hearing, and ſmelling,

ing, are actually found? We have an inſtance of a man who had ſeen objects of a certain colour for the ſpace of twenty or thirty years; and, after a fit of ſickneſs that brought a kind of film on his eyes, the ſame objects appeared to him of a quite different hue. Had this man a right, before his diſorder, to be perſuaded that the organs of his ſight were perfectly ſound? What happened to him in a certain ſpace of time, and might have been the caſe with him all his life, may it not happen, and does it not actually happen, to many others? It is therefore true, that our organs do not give us a perfect certainty, unleſs when they are perfectly formed: but they are ſo only in perfect conſtitutions; and, as thoſe are very rare, it follows, that there is ſcarce one of our organs but what is defective in ſome particular, and that none of our ſenſes can afford us a firſt truth, ſo as to leave us nothing to ſeek beyond it.

108. We are not the leſs certain of having ſeen what we have ſeen.

Evident as this concluſion may ſeem, it does not however deſtroy another truth; which is, that we are certain of what we ſee. This contradiction, whether real or apparent, ſhews that ſomething has been left unexplained; for one rational maxim cannot contradict another rational maxim. In order to clear up this, let us firſt diſtinguiſh what is of a more manifeſt and inconteſtable certainty in the matter.

No

PART I.

No perſon refuſes to acknowledge, that the ſenſes give us a certainty of actual ſenſation, which it is impoſſible to doubt; ſo that I have a ſenſible perception of ſuch a colour, and ſuch a ſound, whenever an object actually ſtrikes my eyes and ears.

109. The actual ſenſation is a metaphyſical certainty.

110. We muſt not confound it with the remembrance we have of it.

It is proper to obſerve, that ſome people ſeem to confound this internal perception of an actual ſenſation with an internal perception nearly ſimilar, which is not however a ſenſation, but a ſimple remembrance, or an idea ſtrongly renewed, of a ſenſation: for example, when I call to mind, without the actual aſſiſtance of the ſenſes, the moſt lively idea poſſible of the whiteneſs of paper, it ſeems evident that the perception of this idea, renewed by the memory, differs abſolutely from the perception which I actually have of the whiteneſs of the paper when it is before my eyes, and I ſee it: however lively an imagination may be, it does not come up to the vivacity of an actual ſenſation.

111. It is not ſimply an internal perception.

Our ſenſations give us therefore an evident certainty of ſomething more than a ſimple internal ſenſation: and this *more* is a modification, which, beſides a particular vivacity of ſentiment, impreſſes our minds with an idea of a being that actually exiſts diſtinct from us, and which we call body; that is, our ſenſations give us the certainty of the exiſtence of bodies. I do not

not ſpeak here of what might happen on extraordinary occaſions, by an effect of divine omnipotence in a preternatural manner; nor of what happens in ſleep, and a phrenzy; for the impreſſions of a man who is awake, and in his ſenſes, are evidently diſtinguiſhed from all others.

112. What our ſenſes teach us of bodies.

But what do we infallibly learn, by our ſenſes, of thoſe bodies conſidered in the ordinary and natural order; and what rule of truth do they furniſh us with, in order to judge of what the objects that ſtrike us are in themſelves? This is a matter, with reſpect to which perhaps we ſometimes depend more than we ought on the teſtimony of the ſenſes.

They may, in fact, perſuade us that there are properties in corporeal things, capable of making a certain impreſſion on us; and this is what is commonly called *a certain quality*. They are therefore infallible in aſſuring us, that there is in bodies a *quality*, which by the eyes gives me the ſentiment of what I call *colour*; by the ears, of what I term *ſound*, &c. but this knowledge is ſomething very vague and imperfect, as may be ſeen in the ſubſequent reflections.

PART I.

CHAPTER XV.

In what our ſenſes are not a rule of truth.

113. Our ſenſes do not diſcover the internal quality of bodies;

FIRST; our ſenſes afford us no evidence of the ſecret in which conſiſts that diſpoſition of bodies, termed *quality*, which makes ſuch an impreſſion on me, and which we have recently mentioned. I fully perceive, and even evidently, that there is in certain bodies a property that produces in me the idea of heat and gravity; but what this property really is in itſelf, is a thing that generally eſcapes my ſenſes, and frequently even my reaſon! I have a glimmering idea only, that by a certain arrangement, and degree or kind of motion, in the moſt minute parts of that body, there is a conformity between that body and the impreſſion it makes upon me. Thus I conjecture, that the power which the ſun has of raiſing in me an idea of light, conſiſts in a certain motion or impulſe of ſmall bodies, through the pores of the air, towards the retina of the eye: but as to this power in itſelf my eyes are perfectly blind, and my reaſon is almoſt as much in the dark.

114. nor all their external properties;

2dly. The ſenſes give us no evidence of an infinite number even of the exterior properties that are found in objects, and which ſurpaſs the ſagacity

ſagacity of our ſight, hearing, and ſmelling. This is evidently proved by microſcopes, which, in objects of ſight, have enabled us to diſcover an immenſe variety of external properties, that ſhew an equal difference in the internal parts, and form ſo many different qualities: more perfect microſcopes would diſplay to our view other properties, of which we have neither a perception, nor perhaps an idea.

115. nor the impreſſions that bodies may make on other men;

3dly. The ſenſes do not inform us of the preciſe impreſſions that are made on other men through their channel. As the impreſſion made on the ſenſes by corporeal qualities, depends on the diſpoſition of our organs; and this diſpoſition being nearly as various in men as their conſtitutions or faces; it naturally follows, that the ſame external quality muſt make ſo many different impreſſions of ſenſation in different men. We ſee daily inſtances of this with regard to the taſte, ſight, and feeling: the ſame wine produces in me a ſenſation of flatneſs or inſipidity, and in another a ſenſation of a lively or briſk taſte: I cannot therefore be aſſured, that any certain body will make exactly the ſame impreſſion on any other perſon that it does on myſelf.

116. nor whether bodies preſerve the ſame qualities from one day to another.

4thly. As reaſon and experience teach us that bodies ſuffer a continual motion and change, though frequently imperceptible in their moſt

PART I.

minute parts, we cannot for a certainty judge, whether a body has, from one day to another, exactly the ſame quality or diſpoſition to make the impreſſions on us it did before; for not only the body changes, but we change likewiſe. I may indeed perceive the change of impreſſion; but whether it ſhould be attributed to the object, or to me, is what I cannot know by the ſole teſtimony of the organ of my ſenſes. It may be obſerved, that this is one of the cauſes of the great uncertainty of the rules of phyſic: they are, it is true, founded on experience; but experience is never preciſely the ſame with regard to different perſons, or even with reſpect to the ſame perſon at different times.

117. Error of Mr. Le Clerc, with reſpect to the prerogative of the ſight.

I cannot, however, conceive why certain philoſophers, like Mr. Le Clerc, attribute to ſome of the ſenſes, and particularly to the ſight, the privilege of being leſs capable of deceiving us than our other ſenſes. The proof he adduces, ſurpriſes me ſtill more: *it is*, ſays he, *becauſe what I ſee makes a ſtronger impreſſion on me than what I hear*. I doubt whether on this, as on many other occaſions, he had himſelf a clear idea of his own aſſertions.

Does he pretend that I have a perception leſs certain, and leſs intimate, of the ſound that ſtrikes my ear, than of the colour which meets my eyes? In hearing the queſtion, and diſtinguiſhing

guiſhing the words, the difficulty is fully explained.

118. How we are to give greater credit to what we ſee than what we hear.

His miſtake was occaſioned by a circumſtance, or rather expreſſion, daily uſed: it is, *that we give greater credit to what we ſee than what we hear ſaid.* And this ſaying is, in fact, well founded: but does it imply, that the teſtimony of the ſight is more perfect than that of the hearing? Far from it: I am as intimately, and as certainly, perſuaded of a ſound when I hear it, as of a colour when I ſee it. What then is the meaning of the maxim which Mr. Le Clerc adduces as a proof with regard to the certainty of the evidence of the ſenſes? It is, that *I am more certain of a thing I have ſeen, than of a thing I have not ſeen*; for what I hear ſaid, without being an eye-witneſs of it, is what I have not ſeen. When I ſimply hear a thing ſaid, without ſeeing it, what ſtrikes my ſenſes at the moment are the words uſed in relating the affair paſſed; and I am then as certain that I hear the thing related, as I ſhould be of ſeeing it if I had actually ſeen it: I have a right therefore to give as much credit to the evidence of my hearing, as to the teſtimony of my ſight. The matter is ſo manifeſt, that, if Mr. Le Clerc ſhould happen to read this, I am convinced he will himſelf be aſtoniſhed at his miſtake, and even be the firſt

PART I.

first to laugh at so egregious a blunder in a philosopher.

119. The senses are given only for the common conduct of life.

To return to the degree of certainty, and rule of truth, which we derive from our senses; we must allow, after what we have remarked, with the generality of philosophers, that the senses have been chiefly given to us for our conduct in life, and not with a view of procuring us knowledge for the mere gratification of curiosity: and, in the practice of life, we have a guide still superior to our senses, that is, reason, whose business it is to preside over the exercise of the senses, to employ them as subalterns, to hear their reports, and correct them when necessary.

CHAPTER XVI.

What may hold the place of first truths in the testimony of the senses.

120. In what our senses may afford first truths.

THE first truths which our senses teach us, may be reduced chiefly to three heads. 1st, They always give a faithful report of things as they appear to them: 2dly, What appears to them is almost always conformable to the truth in matters proper for men in general to know, unless some rational cause of doubt presents itself: 3dly, It will be easy to discern when the

the evidence of the ſenſes is doubtful, by the reflections we ſhall point out. CHAP. XVI.

121. They always report what appears to them.

The ſenſes always give a faithful report of what appears to them: this is manifeſt, as they are neceſſary faculties that act by the neceſſary impreſſion of objects, to which the reports of our ſenſes is always conformable. The eye fixed upon a ſhip which is advancing with rapidity, reports that the ſhore appears to it to move the contrary way: this is what appears to the eye, I ſay, and what muſt appear to it; for in thoſe circumſtances the eye receives the ſame impreſſions as if the veſſel and ſhore were advancing oppoſite ways: phyſical obſervations and the rules of optics both teach this. The ſenſes therefore always inform the ſoul of what muſt, and neceſſarily does appear to them, according to the circumſtances they are in.

If we view the matter in this light, the ſenſes never deceive us; but we deceive ourſelves by our own imprudence, with reſpect to the faithful report of our ſenſes. Their fidelity does not conſiſt in informing the ſoul of what is, but of what appears to them: it is her province to diſtinguiſh the real ſtate of things from what they appear to them.

122. What appears to them is true in things that relate to the common wants of life.

2dly. What appears to our ſenſes is almoſt always conformable to truth, in circumſtances relating to the conduct and general wants of

PART I.

life. Thus, with regard to ſuſtenance and nouriſhment, the ſenſes ſufficiently enable us to diſcern the objects made uſe of for that purpoſe; ſo that the more ſalutary a thing is to us, the greater, generally, is the number of different ſenſations that aſſiſt us to diſtinguiſh it; and what we cannot diſcern by their aſſiſtance, are not objects of our wants, but of our curioſity.

123. They give us but little information of what does not concern thoſe wants.

Thus the ſenſes do not commonly enable us to diſcern, in vinegar and cheeſe, the infinite numbers of mites and ſmall worms with which they ſwarm: this however is a truth, but not one of thoſe to which the ſenſes owe their teſtimony. If we make them ſubſervient to the attainment of ſuch knowledge, it is an advantage we derive from them, that is, as it were, a work of ſupererogation to their function. Though they ſhould therefore on ſuch an occaſion fail to inform us, or give us a wrong information, we ought not however to charge their teſtimony with falſehood, as it is not deſigned to inform us of the truth in thoſe matters: it may be compared to a witneſs who ſhould always ſpeak true as to things within his knowledge, and adviſe us not to rely on what might appear to him in other articles about which he ſhould be examined: if we are deceived on ſuch an occaſion, we are deceived by ourſelves, and not by the evidence. The teſtimony, however, of the ſenſes, is not the leſs a firſt truth in what

124. They are not the leſs rules of truth.

relates

relates to the wants and cuſtoms common to all men; unleſs, as I have added, the mind ſhould conceive ſome reaſon for forming a doubt or an opinion contrary to what appears to them: in which caſe the following rules may be obſerved.

125. Means of verifying the teſtimony of the ſenſes.

When our reaſon, otherwiſe inſtructed by certain facts and reflections, teaches us to judge manifeſtly contrary to what appears to our ſenſes, their teſtimony on this occaſion is by no means a rule of truth. Thus, though the diameter of the ſun does not appear more than two feet, and that of the ſtars one inch; reaſon, however, taught by inconteſtable facts and evident knowledge, informs us that the ſun and ſtars are infinitely larger than they appear.

2. When what actually appears to our ſenſes, is contrary to what has appeared to them at other times; (for we are then apt to judge either that the object is not near enough, or that ſome change has happened in the object itſelf, or in our organs) as our reaſon on thoſe occaſions manifeſtly finds ſomething to contradict what appears to our ſenſes, it ſhould avoid forming any determinate opinion, rather than riſk a falſe deciſion.

126. Age and experience are of great aſſiſtance in this matter.

Age and experience are of great aſſiſtance to us in diſcerning the teſtimony of the ſenſes. A child who perceives his image in water, or a looking-glaſs, takes it for another child; but ex-

PART I.

perience having prompted him to put his hand into the water, or on the mirror, he ſoon reforms the ſenſe of ſight by that of feeling; and he is convinced in time that there is no child where he fancied he ſaw one. The uncultivated native of a country where it never freezes, when he viſits our regions, is apt to take a piece of ice for a ſtone; but experience having ſhewn him that ice will diſſolve in water, he immediately corrects the ſenſe of feeling by that of ſeeing.

127. They are likewiſe confirmed by the teſtimony of different perſons.

The third rule is, when that which appears to our ſenſes is contrary to what appears to the ſenſes of other men, whoſe organs, we have reaſon to believe, are as well formed as our own; ſo that, if my eyes make a report contrary to that of the eyes of all other men, I ſhould rather believe my own particular ſenſe miſtaken than all their ſenſes in general.

It is, in fact, impoſſible that a great number of men ſhould have their organs erroneous as to a point in which they unanimouſly agree that it is mine which is defective; for Nature then would lead to error, and be wanting to herſelf.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XVII.

Elucidation of a difficulty propoſed by ſome Philoſophers, relative to the error of our ſenſes, with reſpect to the extent of objects of ſight.

128. Whether the eyes are calculated to judge of extent.

SOME Philoſophers have endeavoured to ſhew that our eyes are continually miſleading us, becauſe their report is generally falſe with regard to real extent or greatneſs; but I would willingly know from thoſe philoſophers, whether our eyes have been given to us for the abſolute purpoſe of judging of the extent of objects. This is a ſpeculation of little importance, perhaps; but it may however teach us that the extent of bodies is not the proper and peculiar object of the ſight; and we muſt not charge it with an error, if it is defective in a point that is neither the object nor ſubject of its function.

129. Colours are their proper object.

Colours are the proper and peculiar object of the ſight. It is true indeed, that, according to the different angles which the rays of light may accidentally form on the retina, the mind takes occaſion to judge conjecturally with regard to the diſtance and extent of objects; but this conjectural judgement is not more eſſentially dependent on the ſenſe of ſeeing than on that of hearing: the latter,

by

PART I. by its organ the ear, is likewiſe accuſtomed to give accidental evidence of the greatneſs and diſtance of ſonorous bodies, which, in proportion to their extent and remoteneſs, produce in the air ſtronger or weaker undulations that ſtrike the ear more forcibly. But, would it be therefore juſt to pretend to demonſtrate the errors of our ſenſes, becauſe the ear does not enable us to judge exactly of the greatneſs and diſtance of objects? I think not; becauſe on thoſe occaſions the ear does not perform the particular function of the organ of hearing, but ſupplies, as it were by accident, the function of feeling, to which it properly belongs to diſcover the greatneſs and diſtance of things.

130. Greatneſs or extent is the proper object of the feeling:

We may be convinced of this by univerſal practice. The true and eſtabliſhed meaſures of greatneſs are inches, feet, hands, and cubits, which are taken from different parts of the human body: for, though the organ of feeling is diſperſed over all parts of the body, it reſides more ſenſibly in ſome than in others, and particularly in the hand, whoſe peculiar buſineſs it is to take the juſt dimenſions of extent, in meaſuring, by its own proper extent, the greatneſs of the object to which it is applied; and, unleſs the report of the eyes, with reſpect to extent, is thus confirmed by the report of the hand, or of ſome other part that may be meaſured by, or proportioned to the hand, the report of the eyes, with

131. the organ of which reſides particularly in the hands.

with regard to extent, muſt always be reckoned dubious. The viſual ſenſe is not, however, more deceitful on that account, nor its function more imperfect; becauſe of itſelf, and by the direct inſtitution of Nature, it extends only to the diſcovery of colours, and by accident alone to the diſcovery of the diſtance and greatneſs of objects. The ſenſes, therefore, are leſs to be accuſed of deceiving us in the inſtance above mentioned, than our own falſe ideas of the proper function of each of our ſenſes.

132. The ſight and hearing ſupply the office of the feeling in what relates to extent.

The teſtimony of the eyes and ears may ſometimes, it is true, ſupply the place of the teſtimony of feeling, in what relates to the extent and diſtance of objects; but they are, as I have ſaid, by no means a perfect evidence in themſelves of extent, as the feeling gives a leſs ſuſpicious teſtimony, or rather the moſt complete and juſt teſtimony we can poſſibly attain.

133. There is no abſolute extent.

What idea, I would willingly enquire, is formed of abſolute extent, by thoſe who accuſe the viſual ſenſe of not informing us exactly of the nature of this abſolute extent?

Extent or greatneſs, ſay Geometricians, is no more than a proportion, relation, compariſon, or judgement, by which we diſcover in what an object is more or leſs than another; but in all this we cannot find the idea of *abſolute extent*, as all extent is eſſentially *relative*. We muſt not, therefore,

PART I.

therefore, reproach our ſenſes with having plunged us into an abyſs of errors becauſe they do not make known abſolute extent, which neither exiſts, nor can exiſt, and which even implies a contradiction in itſelf.

134. Had there never been but one bowl in the world, it would neither be big nor little.

In fact, had there never been but one bowl in the world, what anſwer could a rational being make, if he ſhould be aſked what was the abſolute extent of that bowl? It would be impoſſible for him to give any; and he muſt ſee no ſenſe in the propoſition, unleſs he ſhould be prompted to enquire, In relation, or in compariſon, to what *would you have me judge of the extent of the bowl?* If, after this, any perſon ſhould reply, I do not ſpeak relatively, or comparatively, but *of the abſolute extent of the bowl, and I aſk you preciſely what it is*; this queſtion, it is evident, would be mere idle verboſity.

The ſame thing daily happens to ourſelves, when things we are unacquainted with are preſented to our view. If a machine, for example, is exhibited, to the uſe of which we are ſtrangers, and we are aſked whether we think it large, we know not what anſwer to make, becauſe we are incapable of forming any compariſon. In fact, the ſame ſpace or compaſs, as that of a nut, is at the ſame time time both great and ſmall; as a diamond of equal ſize would be a very large one, and a melon of the like bigneſs extremely ſmall:

there

there is therefore no abſolute extent; and with reſpect to this there can be no error, either in the ſenſes, or the mind.

135. Every one judges of extent, or greatneſs, according to his own.

This being ſuppoſed; of what uſe are particular obſervations to ſhew that ſmall eyes, as thoſe of a fly, muſt ſee objects of a quite different extent from what they would be ſeen by the eyes of an elephant? What concluſion is to be thence drawn? If the fly and the elephant had underſtanding, neither of them on that account would have a falſe idea of extent; for all extent being relative, they would each of them judge of the extent of objects by their own, of which they ſhould have a perception. They might very juſtly ſay, Such an object is ſo many times bigger or leſs than my body, or ſuch a particular part of my body: and in this reſpect, notwithſtanding the difference of their eyes, their judgement with regard to extent would be ſtill equally true on both ſides.

This is what likewiſe happens with regard to men: however different may be the impreſſion made on their eyes by the extent of objects, their ideas of the extent of objects are equally juſt; becauſe each meaſures them according to the ſentiment he has of his own particular extent.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A recapitulation of the circumſtances required to make the teſtimony of the ſenſes a rule of truth.

136. Rules for confirming the teſtimony of the ſenſes.

1. IF the teſtimony of the ſenſes is not contradicted in us, firſt, either by our own reaſon; ſecondly, by a previous teſtimony of the ſame ſenſes; or, thirdly, by an actual teſtimony of another of our ſenſes; or, fourthly, by the evidence of the ſenſes of other men; it is then indubitable that the teſtimony of the ſenſes is a ſpecies of firſt truth.

137. This teſtimony affects only a part of the object ſeen.

It is proper to remember here, that the teſtimony of the ſenſes does not affect all the parts of the object by which they are ſtruck, as a great number of thoſe parts make no impreſſion on us; for their ſubtility and minuteneſs are infinitely beyond the reach of our ſenſes, which are conſequently incapable of ſhewing us all the qualities inherent in the object.

138. But this does not prevent it from being a rule of truth.

What ſhall I infallibly learn from the ſenſes, ſuppoſing the conditions above mentioned? All that is, as I have ſaid, of general uſe for the conduct and ſupport of life: for example, that certain

certain bodies are liquid, and not hard or ſolid; that bread is ſolid nouriſhment, and that water is proper to dilute it; that it is day at certain hours, and night at others; that the weather is rainy, or ſerene: and ſo of other common truths of that nature; with regard to which we have as real a certainty, though of a different order, as of the certainty of our own exiſtence.

But ſome perſons will perhaps aſk, whether it is not poſſible for our ſenſes to deceive us, at leaſt by a miracle, even under the circumſtances we have mentioned. It is very poſſible; and moreover, the certainty of the ſenſes is confined to the order of Nature, which it ſuppoſes; and beyond that its prerogatives do not extend: this is ſo glaring and obvious in itſelf, that it requires no farther explanation.

CHAPTER XIX.

Of human authority, which in certain circumſtances holds the place of a firſt truth.

BY *authority* I mean the teſtimony of others, as far at it may be a motive for judging that a thing is true. 139. What is meant by authority.

Two kinds of authority are chiefly diſtinguiſhed; *divine*, and *human*. Divine authority is the 140. Divine and human authority.

PART I. the teſtimony of God himſelf; and human, the teſtimony of men.

Suppoſing God to be the truth itſelf, it is impoſſible not to judge a thing true when it is evident that it has been ſaid by him. When we therefore reſiſt divine faith, it is either becauſe we are not convinced that God has confirmed the articles of our faith, or that we have not the idea of God.

Human authority is founded on the reports of men: for, though all men are fallible, there are, however, circumſtances in which we ſhould not reſiſt their teſtimony, and where it is even impoſſible for a rational man to reject it. In ſuch caſes human authority holds the place of a firſt truth, beyond which there is no proceeding.

It is neceſſary to inveſtigate thoſe circumſtances, in order to analyſe that ſpecies of firſt truth which is generally called *moral certainty*.

141. Paſſion and intereſt are obſtacles to truth.

Nature has furniſhed men with ſuch a diſpoſition for diſcovering truth when it is within the reach of their comprehenſion, and for avowing it when they are not reſtrained by paſſion or intereſt, that it is impoſſible all ſhould concur in acknowledging a falſehood for truth.

142. Excluding thoſe obſtacles, the teſtimony of men is true under certain circumſtances.

When we ſee, therefore, that no paſſion or intereſt can influence all men to atteſt unanimouſly certain facts, ſuch as, that there exiſts a city called Rome, or Conſtantinople; that a ſovereign reigned in

in England of the name of Canute, &c. the ſole teſtimony of men united in opinion with regard to thoſe matters, is to my mind a rule of truth that neceſſarily captivates my judgement, and conſequently is a real certainty or evidence in the following circumſtances: CHAP. XIX.

143. Circumſtances that confirm authority,

1. If the knowledge of the truth in queſtion is ſuch as may be perfectly attained by the men who atteſt it.

2. If their number is ſo great, that a more conſiderable cannot be even deſired by men of ſenſe for a ſecure teſtimony.

3. If there is not the leaſt room to ſuſpect either intereſt or paſſion in their evidence.

4. If their teſtimony is not contradicted even by thoſe who might be intereſted in oppoſing it.

144. Being united, they are rules of truth.

Some one of theſe circumſtances perhaps, and eſpecially the latter, is not neceſſary; and, though it ſhould be wanting, the authority of men would not be the leſs a rule of truth: but, when the four are found united, I ſay, that it is a rule of truth, of ſuch certainty, that no rational man either can, or ever will diſpute it.

The proof is drawn from what I have advanced, viz. that, in thoſe circumſtances, if we mean to be candid, we ſhall find it impoſſible

PART I. not to judge the thing true: therefore, ſays Mr. Locke, we admit it as eaſily, and adhere to it as firmly, as if it were a certain knowledge; ſo that, in conſequence thereof, we reaſon and act with as little doubt, as if it were a perfect demonſtration.

145. Mr. Locke calls this ſort of truth only probability.

I am however ſurpriſed, that Mr. Locke gives only the name of *probability* to this rule of our judgements: his words are theſe. *The higheſt degree of probability is, when the general conſent of all men, in all ages,* as far as can be known, *concurs with conſtant experience in confirming the truth of a particular fact atteſted by ſincere witneſſes.* I am, I ſay, ſurpriſed that Mr. Locke ſhould give no more to all this than the name of *probability*. It is not, however, my intention to loſe time in diſputing about a word: Mr. Locke, perhaps, confined the name of *certainty* to ſuch knowledge as we acquire only by perſonal experience; but it muſt be acknowledged, that the juſtneſs neither of his thoughts nor expreſſions would have ſuffered, if he had, on this occaſion, conformed to general practice: at any rate, he ſhould have aſſigned his motives for the deviation, where no plauſible reaſon appears to juſtify it.

In fact, when he ſays, that we adhere to this probability *as firmly as to a certain knowledge*, does he not ſay, that it is not *a certain knowledge?* and, if it be not, why does he declare, that *it excludes all*

all doubt equally with a perfect demonſtration? Can a knowledge that excludes *all doubt* equally with a demonſtration, be leſs than certain and evident?

146. He does not appear to ſpeak conſequentially on this occaſion.

Laying aſide, however, this ſpecies of contradiction, if Mr. Locke really refuſed to admit, as an infallible rule of truth, what he has ſimply denominated *probability*, and which he afterwards does not ſcruple to call *aſſurance*, I would willingly aſk, why he receives as a certainty the evidence of the eyes, and not the unanimous teſtimony of all men? Is it not Nature alike, in both caſes, that impoſes the neceſſity of aſſent to thoſe teſtimonies, and convinces us that neither can deceive us?

And, indeed, there is no perſon, any way converſant with hiſtory, who is not at leaſt as fully convinced that there has exiſted a city called Carthage, as he is certain of what he has been eye-witneſs to; ſo that it is no leſs impoſſible for me to judge that all authors have been miſtaken in this matter, than it is to believe that my eyes deceive me when I exert all imaginable care to rectify their uſe.

Mr. Locke moreover confeſſes, it is impoſſible to judge that all the types of a printing-houſe could ever be accidentally diſpoſed in ſuch happy order, as to form a poem ſo regular and elegant as the Æneid of Virgil; nor is it leſs impoſſible

PART I.

for me to believe that all men have been deceived, or have agreed to deceive me by perſuading me to think that there exiſted a city of Carthage. It is therefore certain, that I am by no means at liberty to form a judgement contrary to the unanimous teſtimony of men: it appears evident to me, that *authority*, taken in this light, is not a ſimple probability, but a real certainty.

147. This certainty makes an impreſſion as neceſſary, but leſs lively.

I confeſs however, at the ſame time, that the latter kind of certainty, which forces my judgement with equal reality, ſubjects it nevertheleſs with leſs rapidity and vigour. I am not more certain that I have at this moment a paper before my eyes, than I am of the preſent exiſtence of the city of Conſtantinople, and that there was formerly a city of Carthage: but the firſt certainty makes ſtill a more lively impreſſion on me than the ſecond; and this is what confirms, in a very rational ſenſe, the maxim mentioned elſewhere, *that we give greater credit to what we ſee, than to what we hear*; that is to ſay, we adhere to it, if not with more truth, at leaſt with greater ſenſibility.

149. Supreme degree of moral certainty.

The teſtimonies of human authority, univerſally received, form the higheſt degree of that kind of certainty commonly ſtyled *moral certainty*.

This

This name merits particular attention, as it gives us to underſtand, that this ſpecies of certainty has a particular relation to the manners and conduct of men in the correſpondence and ſociety naturally kept up between them. Such, in fact, is the ſort of certainty by which they are governed in their deſigns, proſpects, enterpriſes, and general proceedings; ſo that he who ſhould act contrary to this kind of certainty would appear as extravagant, and would be as really ſo, as if it were a metaphyſical or geometrical certainty.

149. Why this certainty is called moral.

Moral certainty however ſeems to have ſome degrees; and it makes leſs impreſſion on us, in proportion as the conditions I have mentioned are found leſs numerous and forcible.

Suppoſe, therefore, it relates to an hiſtorical fact, even thoſe, with reſpect to whom it is aſſerted, are leſs fully perſuaded of its truth when they ſee it contradicted by others; for, though it is ſeen thoſe are ſomewhat miſtaken in the matter, their judgement however leaves a kind of ſuſpicion, that they ſee perhaps ſomething in the affair in queſtion which eſcapes us.

150. Degree of moral certainty.

But, on the other hand, we muſt alſo allow, that moral certainty ſtill prevails, notwithſtanding thoſe ſhadows of ſuſpicion produced by weak imaginations, which are quickly diſperſed by a more ſerious attention: ſo that thoſe who have

151. It ſubſiſts, notwithſtanding vain ſuſpicions.

PART I.

investigated the truth of certain historical facts, remain firmly convinced of them, though they see them contradicted by authors and persons whom interest or passion influences to speak and think differently from others.

152. The three principal conditions are sufficient.

It seems therefore, as I have hinted, that moral certainty, at least when it is not in the highest degree, requires only the two or three conditions first mentioned, viz. 1. That the authority and testimony of men appertain to facts of which the knowledge is perfectly within the reach of those who relate them, and that they could not have been mistaken.

2. That they must be so numerous, and of such different characters and dispositions, that there cannot be any room for suspecting them of collusion.

3. Their testimony must be free from every appearance of passion or interest.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XX.

An appendix upon memory: whether it is a rule of truth.

IT is neceſſary to mention here a rule of truth, which appears to ſome people to be the ſame with thoſe we have been ſpeaking of, and which however might be thought different. It conſiſts in the ſimple remembrance of truths, and not in the actual impreſſion they make upon us, which relates as much to truths that are *logical* and *conſequential*, as thoſe that are *real* and *primary*. It is aſked, for example, whether, after having known by rational deduction all the conſequences of a principle, I am as well convinced of it when I afterwards ſimply recollect the aſſurance I gained by argument, as when it was preſent to my mind, and actually convinced me. In like manner it is aſked, whether I am as fully aſſured of a thing which I remember to have ſeen, as when I actually ſaw it.

153. The memory of certain facts.

If the degree of vivacity of impreſſion is conſidered in the certainty, all the world will allow, that it is greater on one ſide than the other; the conviction being quite differently ſenſible, when

154. Its impreſſion is leſs lively.

PART I. I ſee, from what it is when I only recollect to have ſeen.

Beſides, may I not poſſibly happen to miſtake an imaginary for a real remembrance? If it be, however, a remembrance that is very diſtinct and circumſtantial, it ſupplies the place of the actual preſence of the object, and we cannot be miſtaken in it; but, if the memory be ever ſo little impaired or obſcured, as is the caſe with almoſt every perſon ſooner or later, though in a manner frequently imperceptible, we ſhould be cautious of the conviction that is derived from memory. Perſonal experience, however, and reflection, muſt regulate the greater or leſs degree of credit that is to be given to the certainty of the memory. This may ſuggeſt a very important reflection.

155. Memory of the conviction formerly had.

We find ſome people attached to certain opinions; and, becauſe they cannot actually account for them, they are conſidered as wrong-headed and obſtinate; which is not always the caſe: it ariſes only from their not recollecting the reaſons of their opinion, while they clearly remember that they were deeply impreſſed and fully convinced by them. Sometimes alſo it may be a pretext of obſtinacy, in order to perſuade themſelves that nothing can be added or oppoſed to the reaſons of which they imagine they have felt all the force. When things, therefore, merit attention, we ſhould, in matters of proofs and arguments,

arguments, rarely truſt to the ſimple remembrance of our having been convinced by them; but we ſhould actually recall them to the memory, and diſtruſt them the more, the greater difficulty we find in tracing them; becauſe nothing remains ſo deeply impreſſed on the mind, and is more eaſily recovered, eſpecially when it is wanting, than a ſolid reaſon. I know that this maxim is not ſo general but it may admit of exceptions; but they are too few, generally ſpeaking, to reſtrain us from adhering, in practice, to the rule here laid down.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of rules of probability, which ſupply the place of firſt truths in the common conduct of life.

156. Probability ſupplies the place of truth.

TRUTH is a thing of ſuch importance to man, that he ſhould always purſue the beſt methods for attaining it; and, when the object eludes all his reſearches, he ſhould remedy the diſappointment by attaching himſelf to what comes neareſt to it; and what comes neareſt to it, we call *probability*.

157. It reſembles the truth only in certain particulars.

It is neceſſary to obſerve, that a thing, or rather an opinion, approaches the truth only in certain particulars; for, to approach the *truth* is

PART 1.

reſemble the truth; that is, to be proper for forming or renewing in the mind the idea of truth: and, if an opinion were to produce equal ideas of *truth*, in every point of view in which it might be conſidered, nothing would appear in it but what was true; neither could we judge the matter otherwiſe than true; and it would in that caſe be really *true*, or the truth itſelf.

158. In ſome particulars alſo it is like falſehood.

As what is not true, however, is falſe; and as what does not reſemble truth reſembles falſehood; we find in every thing, that is ſimply called *probability*, ſome circumſtances that reſemble falſehood: it would be a miſapplication, therefore, of terms, to ſay an opinion is preciſely probable becauſe it is found in ſeveral particulars to reſemble truth. Opinions having other parts that reſemble falſehood, thoſe oppoſite ſides ſhould be duly weighed, in order to know which preponderate, that we may properly attribute the quality of probability to the opinion conſidered; without which, it would be at the ſame time probable and not probable; which would be merely cavilling, or playing upon words.

159. What equally reſembles truth and falſehood is not probable.

In fact, what ſenſe would there be in ſaying, I call *reſembling truth* what reſembles falſehood as much as truth? Were we aſked what colour a ſtuff, equally ſtained with black and white, reſembles, would we anſwer, that it reſembles white becauſe it is partly white? An enquiry might be

be made at the ſame time, why we did not ſay likewiſe that it reſembled black, as it had as much of the one as the other? With leſs reaſon could we ſay, that the colour of the ſtuff reſembled white, if it had more of black than of white: on the contrary, if the white predominated much more than the black, ſo as to give us ſuch a ſtrong idea of white that the black ſhould, comparatively, make but a very faint impreſſion, we would ſay, that colour comes near to white, and reſembles white: it might even approach it ſo very near, as to make us confound it with white, and call it ſo, eſpecially on thoſe occaſions where it would not be neceſſary to diſtinguiſh ſo preciſely the colour of white from what came very near it.

160. We are not ſo very exact in this matter on ordinary occaſions.

It happens, however, on occaſions where we are not ſo very preciſe in our manner of ſpeaking, that when we find a few more true parts than falſe, we call the thing probable; but to be abſolutely probable, there muſt manifeſtly and obviouſly appear many more parts true than falſe: without this the reſemblance remains indeterminate, and approaches not nearer to truth than falſehood.

What has been ſaid of reſemblance of truth, is underſtood likewiſe of probability, as probability relates only to what the mind approves, on account of its reſemblance inclining to that ſide where the greateſt appearances of truth are, rather

PART I. rather than to the contrary; ſuppoſing the mind wiſhes to be determined.

161. The mind may ſuſpend its judgement as to veriſimilar matters, but not judge the contrary.

I ſay, ſuppoſing it wiſhes to be determined; for, as the mind neceſſarily inclines only to the truth, when that does not appear in the cleareſt and fulleſt light, it may ſuſpend its determination; but, if it does not ſuſpend it, it can then only incline to that ſide on which there is the greateſt appearance of truth.

162. Whether we may judge in favour of what is leaſt probable.

Two difficulties occur on this ſubject, which require explanation: the firſt is, to know whether the mind might not be determined in favour of an opinion leſs probable, by conſidering it only in thoſe particulars that come near the truth; though it ſhould have many more, that approached near to falſehood, to which the mind actually paid no attention: this is as it were the whole ground-work of the famous queſtion relative to *probable opinion*, which is in the mouth of every body, and which, however, few underſtand.

I anſwer, that the mind might then be determined as to the parts that approach the truth in the opinion, but not as to the opinion itſelf: for, if we do not wiſh to miſapply terms, an opinion *leſs probable* is that which preſents to the mind a much greater appearance of falſehood than of truth. If, therefore, when we are determined,

mined, we have not preſent to our minds the appearances of falſehood that are in the opinion; we are not determined with reſpect to the opinion itſelf, but only with regard to thoſe appearances of truth we diſcover in it, and which alone are not the opinion; as, according to this ſuppoſition, the opinion is leſs probable: and this ariſes both from a greater appearance of falſehood, and a leſs appearance of truth.

To aſk, therefore, *whether we may determine in favour of an opinion leſs probable, conſidering it only as to thoſe parts that approach the truth*, is to aſk whether we may determine for an opinion *leſs probable*, when it is no longer an opinion *leſs probable*; which is mere idle verboſity.

161. Whether parts, neither true nor falſe, may be found in an opinion.

It may be aſked, with more reaſon, whether in an opinion there might not be parts of a mixed nature between truth and falſehood, of which the mind could form no determinate idea. This is a thing I cannot diſpute. Thus, in the opinion of ſome, that there are inhabitants in the moon, I find ſome colour of truth, in ſaying that matter, being ſuppoſed of ſimilar nature, if it can ſupport inhabitants in one of the globes of the univerſe, it may preſerve them in another. I ſee likewiſe ſome appearance of falſehood in declaring that, becauſe it has inhabitants in one of its globes, it follows that it has them in all the reſt;

PART I.

reſt; but, to know whether it was conſiſtent with the magnificence of God to place inhabitants in all the globes of the univerſe, is what I cannot judge to be true or falſe, becauſe it is a point in which the mind is loſt and bewildered, as it is an object beyond the reach of its faculties. I am ſpeaking here of what naturally paſſes in the mind, and not of what religion may teach us.

164. What appears neither true, nor falſe, ſhould make no impreſſion.

In an hypotheſis ſimilar to that above ſtated, in which truth and falſehood appear to the mind with ſomething of a mixed nature, partaking of both, what methods are to be taken for diſcovering *probability?* We muſt conſider what is of a mixed nature, between truth and falſehood, as nothing; as in fact it is incapable of making any impreſſion on a rational mind: beſides, as I have already obſerved, we ſhould weigh what appears true againſt what appears falſe, to ſee whether one of the two does not viſibly preponderate. We never hold an opinion as *probable*, when it is not viſibly impreſſed with ſtronger marks of truth than falſehood.

165. The word *probable* is equivocal in its uſe.

As cuſtom, however, authoriſes the word *probable*, even on thoſe occaſions when reaſons appear for judging on either ſide; we have no objection to its being employed, provided it be remembered that *probable*, in that ſenſe, reſembles falſe-

falſehood as much as truth: and after all, when an opinion is accompanied by appearances of truth and falſehood nearly equal, I would, in that caſe, rather call it *dubious* than probable; but common diſcourſe will not be reformed by my reflexions, or metaphyſical preciſion. CHAP. XXI.

CHAPTER XXII.

Of different degrees and ſpecies of probability.

166. Every probability ſubſiſts with ſome poſſibility of falſehood.

THE higheſt degree of probability is what approaches to a phyſical certainty; which may itſelf, perhaps, ſubſiſt with ſome ſuſpicion or poſſibility of falſehood: for example, I am phyſically certain, that my eyes are actually ſtruck with the whiteneſs of this paper; but this certainty ſuppoſes things to remain in a natural ſtate; and, if unaffected by any miraculous cauſe, probability increaſes, as it were, and approaches by ſo many degrees nearer to truth, as we find it more clearly poſſeſſed of a greater number of the following circumſtances.

167. Circumſtances that increaſe probability.

1. When what we judge probable agrees with evident truth.

2. When

PART I.

2. When, having doubted of an opinion, we afterwards find it confirmed in proportion as we conſider it more attentively, and more cloſely examine it.

3. When proofs, of which we had no idea before, ariſe to ſtrengthen thoſe that had been the foundation of our opinion.

4. When we judge in conſequence of a greater experience in the things we inveſtigate.

5. When the judgement we formed of things of a ſimilar nature has been afterwards confirmed. Such are nearly the various degrees of probability by which, according to their greater extent and number, our opinion is more nearly ſimilar to truth; ſo that, if all thoſe circumſtances were to be found in their fulleſt extent, as the opinion would then be perfectly ſimilar to truth, and unlike it in no particular, it would not only paſs for probable, but true; or even it would be true in fact; as a piece of ſtuff that reſembled white in every reſpect, would not only be like white, but likewiſe called abſolutely white.

168. Men, it is preſumed, tell truth.

What has been now ſaid of probability in general, is of itſelf, as it were, applicable to that probability which is deduced from the authority and teſtimony of men: for, though men in general may lye, and we have frequent experience of their untruth; nevertheleſs, as Nature has

has inſpired all men with the love of truth, we may preſume, that he who ſpeaks to us is governed by that inclination, when we have no reaſon to judge or ſuſpect him of falſehood.

169. Reaſons for judging that they do not ſpeak truth.

The reaſons we may have are deduced from the man himſelf, or the things related by him; from the man, with reſpect to his capacity or inclination.

170. With regard to their capacity.

1. With reſpect to his capacity, if he is little qualified to judge properly of what he relates. 2. If he has been frequently miſtaken at other times. 3. If he is of a haſty and warm imagination: a character very common among men of wit, who eaſily take the ſhadow or appearance of things for the things themſelves; and the phantom of their own ideas, for the truth which they fancy they diſcern.

171. With reſpect to their inclination or will.

With reſpect to their inclination. 1. If it be a man who has contracted a habit of ſpeaking differently from what he thinks, though in trifling matters only; for, when the habit is once formed, it generally influences the conduct in the more important concerns of life, as in matters of little conſequence: beſides, though the habit ſhould not be formed, if we have frequently experienced that a perſon is apt to deviate from the truth, we ſhould be more cautious of believing him; eſpecially if we diſcover, or juſtly ſuſpect,

PART I.

ſpect, that he has any intereſt in diſguiſing the truth, and may hope to ſucceed by diſſimulation.

172. With regard to the things of which they ſpeak.

With regard to the things he ſays. 1. If they do not regularly follow, and appear conſiſtent. 2. If they do not correſpond with what we have heard from others of equal credit. 3. If they are of themſelves difficult to be believed, or upon ſubjects in which he might have been eaſily deceived.

173. Circumſtances in which they ſhould be credited.

Contrary circumſtances give probability to what we are told, 1. When we know the perſon who ſpeaks to us to be a man of a clear and ſound underſtanding, of an imagination temperate and plauſible, and of ſtrict and unſhaken ſincerity. 2. When, moreover, the circumſtances of things related by him are no way contradictory, but agree with facts or principles of which we have no room to entertain a doubt; according as thoſe circumſtances ſhall increaſe and be confirmed by the teſtimony of greater numbers, the probability will likewiſe acquire an additional proportion of ſtrength. It may, even in this manner, attain to ſo high a degree, as to make it impoſſible for us to ſuſpend our judgement at the view of ſo many circumſtances reſembling truth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Elucidation of a particular difficulty relative to the probability that is founded on teſtimonies tranſmitted from one perſon to another.

174. Whether authority is augmented by the ſucceſſive relation of a number of perſons.

A Difficulty is ſtarted with regard to what has been ſaid, that the probability increaſes in proportion to the number of perſons who deliver the teſtimony on which it is founded. The difficulty reſts on the number of perſons who ſpeak only from the authority of each other; ſo that the firſt alone have given evidence with reſpect to the knowledge they had of a fact, perſonally and of themſelves, without the intervention of any other authority.

175. Mr. Locke imagines the authority is thereby leſſened.

In this ſuppoſition, it is aſked whether all the teſtimonies, given ſolely in conſequence of the firſt being collected together, form an authority that adds any degree of ſtrength to the firſt alone. Some perſons think not: and even Locke will have it, that the authority is thereby manifeſtly leſs. To prove this, he ſays, that, the more diſtant a truth is from its ſource, the weaker it grows; *ſo that a teſtimony has leſs ſtrength in proportion to its diſtance from the original truth. A man worthy of*

PART I.

credit, ſays he, *who declares that a thing is known to himſelf*, is a ſufficient proof; *but, if another perſon, equally worthy of belief, relates the ſame thing, on the authority of the firſt, the teſtimony is leſs ſtrong.* If a third declares it, on the report of the ſecond, the teſtimony is ſtill weaker; and ſo on progreſſively: ſo that, if we proceed to a hundred, the teſtimony muſt be, in a manner, invalid. This author, therefore, condemns a practice common among ſome people, with whom opinions acquire *new ſtrength as they grow old.* It is on this foundation, adds he, that propoſitions *evidently falſe, or very uncertain in their origin, come to be reſpected as authentic truths by a probability taken in a wrong light.*

Every circumſtance advanced by ſo ingenious an author, relative to a difficulty of ſuch an intereſting nature, merits, I think, a particular diſcuſſion.

176. A falſe or uncertain opinion is not the leſs ſo for being old.

It is certain, that an opinion falſe or uncertain does not become leſs falſe or uncertain by growing old; and the practice of conſidering it certain, merely on account of its antiquity and extenſive circulation, merits contempt: for time can never affect the truth. Beſides, this practice appears entirely foreign to the queſtion, and does not belong to the terms of the hypotheſis advanced by Mr. Locke.

177. This is not the point in queſtion.

In

In fact, he ſpeaks, in his ſuppoſition, of the teſtimony of a truth that may have been tranſmitted down to us by various witneſſes in ſucceſſion, but ſuppoſing each of them equally credible and worthy of faith. According to this ſuppoſition, however, provided we ſtrictly adhere to it, the teſtimony muſt not, I think, be weakened for having been tranſmitted by various witneſſes, though their number ſhould amount to a hundred. In order to illuſtrate the matter, let us exemplify it by an hiſtorical fact.

178. The queſtion with reſpect to a true fact tranſmitted by witneſſes worthy of belief.

I will ſuppoſe, that an author worthy of credit has written, that a monarch of the name of Cyrus ſubjected a great empire in Aſia, and reigned over the Perſians: if a ſecond author, equally worthy of faith, teſtifies the ſame fact on the authority of the firſt writer, a third after that of the ſecond, and, in like manner, others to a hundred, ſo as that each of the hundred be equally worthy of credit: I ſay, that, according to this ſuppoſition, the hundredth teſtimony is not weakened by the diſtance of time from the original truth. The reaſon I have, in fact, to believe the firſt teſtimony, and on which a degree of probability is founded, is the ſame that authoriſes an equal degree of probability in the hundredth teſtimony, as, according to the ſuppoſition, I find equally on all ſides witneſſes worthy of credit, who, from hand to hand, or from mouth to mouth, have

PART I.

tranſmitted to me the ſame truth, without my perceiving, or having any reaſon to ſuſpect, that it has been altered. Nor does it really appear, that we are, at preſent, leſs aſſured of the reign of Cyrus over the Perſians, than people were a hundred years ago; and thoſe who lived a hundred years ago were as well perſuaded of it as people two hundred years before; and it was equally believed a thouſand years ago as a hundred years after the death of Cyrus.

9. We are not leſs aſſured at preſent of the reign of Cyrus, than people were a thouſand years ago.

Locke appears to be miſtaken, therefore, in imagining that probability is weakened after a ſucceſſion of witneſſes, *whoſe authority is equally reſpectable*. It is true, that the ſuppoſition is rarely found to be exactly conformable to reality, with reſpect to facts that are neither public, nor intereſting; for it is not poſſible to find ſuch a number of witneſſes equally *worthy* of credit, that is, equally ſincere, judicious, and exact, in giving a juſt and faithful relation of what they have ſeen or heard, without adding or diminiſhing the leaſt circumſtance, either as to the ſenſe of things, or the words, which in paſſing through various lips imperceptibly alter the meaning.

180. A diſtinction is to be made between different kinds of traditional authority.

A wide diſtinction, however, muſt be made between different truths tranſmitted by a long train of ſucceſſive teſtimonies, and by what is commonly called the *way of tradition*.

If

If they are accompanied by a great number of motives, or particular circumſtances, which may eaſily eſcape the penetration or memory of man, and the imperfection of human language; if they are of ſuch a nature as that they may be altered, either on account of circumſtances that cannot be proved, or through the intereſt people might have in diſguiſing them, the way of tradition, in ſuch caſes, neither can, nor ought to be readily admitted.

181. Some are liable to error.

But, if nothing is found to make it ſuſpected, it does not appear reaſonable to conclude, that the knowledge of a truth is weakened merely on account of the antiquity of the tradition, when all thoſe who have ſucceſſively confirmed this tradition are *equally worthy of credit*.

On the contrary, the more long and ancient a tradition of the kind is, the more credible and authentic it becomes: not that the teſtimonies given of it, after a long ſeries of years, are really of greater weight than the firſt, whence the tradition originated; but becauſe, having been tranſmitted by many, if they are men of penetration, judgement, and capacity, and eſpecially ſuch as were powerfully intereſted at all times in examining and confirming the firſt teſtimony which began the tradition, it is evident, that the original teſtimony becomes thereby leſs ſuſpicious,

182. In what caſe the antiquity of an opinion makes it more credible.

PART I. cious, and more certain. We might, in fact, imagine, that credit poſſibly had been firſt given to it through prejudice or intereſted motives, which cannot be the ſame with all men in all times; and conſequently a ſucceſſion of time and teſtimonies makes the firſt teſtimony leſs ſuſpicious and uncertain, or rather, more ſolid and perfect. It is far, therefore, from being generally true, that the more diſtant a truth is from the period of its commencement, the weaker it grows: on the contrary, there are opinions which acquire new ſtrength by time; otherwiſe a particular abſurdity would thence enſue, and an authentic record, confirmed by a great number of edicts or teſtimonies, given in conſequential ſupport of each other, would thereby become more dubious; and thus, what is judged moſt reſpectable and beſt founded in ſociety, would appear moſt contemptible, and leaſt authentic.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of the uſe of probability.

THOUGH this article ſeems to relate to practice, which is not calculated for a ſcience of ſpeculation, it will not be improper, however, to beſtow ſome little reflection upon it; eſpecially when, by conſidering probability as to its uſe, we ſhall diſcover the nature of it better; and, as ſpeculation is generally a principle in the direction of practice, practice, on this occaſion, ſhall help to expound ſpeculation.

183. The uſe of probability is not a ſcience of ſpeculation.

The moſt natural and general uſe of probability is, to ſupply the place of *truth*; ſo that, where our minds cannot reach the truth, they may at leaſt arrive at probability, as a place of reſt, and what is neareſt to that of truth, to which natural propenſity leads them. Probability, however, muſt make various impreſſions on us, according to the ſubject and occaſion.

184. In conduct, it ſhould ſupply the place of truth.

1. With regard to things of mere ſpeculation, it is prudent to avoid giving a free aſſent to them until after mature deliberation; for, although truth neceſſarily forces conviction, and that the appearance of truth ſimply conſidered in

185. Our aſſent to it ſhould be given with reſerve.

PART I.

in general produces the ſame effects in proportion, the appearance however of truth in probability always ſubſiſts with an appearance of falſehood, which has a ſufficient influence on the mind to ſuſpend our judgement until the will determines it; I ſay, *ſuſpend* it, becauſe it has not the power of determining the mind on the ſide of what appears leaſt true: wherefore I ſay, that, in matters of mere ſpeculation, it is very right not to ſuffer the will to determine the judgement, unleſs when the degrees of probability are ſo conſiderable, that they almoſt entirely efface all appearance of falſehood, and every danger of deception.

186. We ſhould frequently ſuſpend our judgement, with reſpect to probability in ſpeculation;

187. eſpecially in ſpeculative matters.

In things, in fact, of mere ſpeculation, no inconveniency can reſult from ſuſpending our judgement; and the danger of being deceived, which ever accompanies a probable judgement, although in a leſs degree than the confidence of not being deceived, ſeems a ſufficient motive for withholding our opinion: for what occaſion is there for judging, when, on the one hand, there can be no inconveniency in avoiding it; and, on the other ſide, we may fall into an error by judging? Can it anſwer any purpoſe to run ſuch a riſk, when it is neither uſeful, nor neceſſary?

188. To refrain from judging is often a mark of a judicious mind.

Some perſons will perhaps ſay, we ſhould then refrain from judging with reſpect to moſt part of our knowledge; and that is the character of ſtupi-

ſtupidity. On the contrary, it is the character of a ſenſible man, and a true philoſopher, to judge of objects from evidence alone, when there can be no reaſon for acting otherwiſe. There can be none, however, for judging of things of mere ſpeculation, when they are no more than probable. We ſhould be ſatisfied, on ſuch occaſions, with judging of what is evident; that ſuch an opinion is probable, and perhaps the moſt probable: but we muſt not judge that the moſt probable opinion is therefore true; for this practice would ſtrengthen a diſpoſition of the will, that is already too apt to perſuade the mind to conſider as true whatever might be pleaſing to the will to be ſo. CHAP. XXIV.

189. Difference between judging a thing probable, and judging the ſame thing true.

Some perſons may not at firſt perhaps diſcern the difference there is between judging a thing probable, and judging this probable thing true: but a very little attention will be ſufficient to demonſtrate ſo eſſential a diſparity between them, that I know not whether it is not that which chiefly diſtinguiſhes men of ſolid underſtanding from others.

190. In practice, probability ſhould determine, as well as truth;

This rule however, ſo judicious with reſpect to things of mere ſpeculation, is not the ſame as to matters of practice and conduct, where there is an abſolute neceſſity of acting, or not acting, one way or another: in fact, though the will ſhould not determine the judgement to take probability

PART I.

bability for truth, it ſhould however influence it, with regard to things of practice, to adhere to probability, and be ſatisfied with it, as with truth; fixing our attention only on the appearances of truth, which, in probability, ſurpaſs the appearances of falſehood.

191. Becauſe it is neceſſary to act and come to ſome determination.

The reaſon of this is evident; as, with regard to practice, it is neceſſary to act, and conſequently to come to ſome determination; for, were we to remain undetermined, we ſhould never act, which would be the moſt pernicious and moſt abſurd conduct. That we may not, therefore, remain undetermined, we muſt, as it were, ſhut our eyes to what may appear true on the ſide contrary to that we embrace; for, as truth itſelf naturally attracts us, it would not fail to ſuſpend our determination. It is proper therefore to obſerve, that prudence acts only with reſpect to probability; for to act againſt a truth perfectly evident, is not merely imprudence, but downright folly.

192. During deliberation we ſhould view the thing on all ſides, and afterwards pay attention only to what is true.

Though, in deliberation, we cannot be too careful to examine the different circumſtances or appearances of truth, that are found on every ſide, in order to be certain where the probability lies: when we are, however, once aſſured of this, we ſhould, as I have already remarked, conſider it as true with reſpect to practice; that is, we ſhould pay attention only to what is true, that we may not loſe ſight of it:

other-

otherwiſe we ſhould fall into irreſolution and inaction, or levity and inconſtancy, which are marks of littleneſs or weakneſs of mind.

193. Irreſolution ſhews capacity, and want of capacity.

I am ſenſible that many, on the contrary, imagine, that irreſolution and inconſtancy frequently proceed from ſuperior capacity, which perceives every reaſon, that is, the marks and appearances for and againſt the ſame thing; and, having a lively perception of them, it conceives all the force of both, which reſtrains it from entirely relinquiſhing the one in favour of the other. But this irreſolution is ſtill a defect of the mind, which, in the midſt of the various appearances of the ſame object, cannot diſtinguiſh thoſe that ſhould be preferred to the reſt, when a determination is neceſſary; or that does not, at leaſt, ſufficiently perceive this neceſſity, without which there is no acting on occaſions where we ſuppoſe it neceſſary; except, on ſuch occaſions, we may, and often more wiſely, as I have already obſerved, remain undetermined between two opinions that are no more than probable.

PART II.

In which Firſt Truths are examined with reſpect to Beings generally conſidered.

ATIC

CHAPTER I.

Of beings in general.

194. The idea of beings furniſhes firſt truths.

WE have hitherto conſidered what part in our judgements gives them the character of firſt truths. We now mean to examine what can be diſcovered of firſt truths, relative to the nature and properties of beings on which we generally exerciſe our judgement: ſo that the preciſe conſideration of their principal attributes may furniſh us with accurate ideas to form as many firſt truths with regard to all beings.

It may appear neceſſary firſt to explain what a *being* is in itſelf; but the idea of it is ſo manifeſt, ſimple, and neceſſary, that it is impoſſible to make it more clearly known. Therefore, if we ſay, that *a being is that which exiſts*, or *the contrary of nothing*, as it is termed by ſome, the matter is not more clearly explained; as the terms of the definition, *exiſt* and *nothing*, are neither more ſimple nor more clear than *being*, and even ſuppoſe the knowledge of others.

PART II.

In every being whatever, all that can be known is comprehended under two points of view. 1: As to the parts without which it would not be called that being; and this is what is called *eſſence*. 2: With reſpect to the parts without which it would ſtill be called the ſame being; and this is named *mode* or *manner of being*. Thus, when we find that man cannot be called ſo without being *a rational animal*, we judge, that thoſe two ideas, *animal* and *rational*, conſtitute the eſſence of man: and when, on the contrary, we diſcover that man would be ſtill entitled to that appellation, without having a taſte for poetry, or being five feet high, we conclude, that this *taſte* or *height* are modes. Therefore, all that is, or can be conceived, in every being, is either the *eſſence* or *mode*. We ſhall firſt ſpeak of the eſſence, and afterwards of the modes.

195. We ſhould conſider in beings their eſſence and qualities.

CHAPTER II.

Of the eſſence of beings.

196. Definition of eſſence no way inſtructive.

ESSENCE is commonly defined, *to be that by which a thing is what it is*; but, as a thing is of itſelf what it is, this definition of eſſence ſays no more than that *the eſſence of a thing* is

is to be *that thing*; which ſcarce conveys a better idea of *eſſence* in general, than if no attempt had been made to explain it.

197. The eſſence taken for the definition.

At other times, Philoſophers, deſirous of diſcovering the eſſence of each particular being, repreſent a certain number of qualities, of which they form a collection of ideas, which they term *definition*; ſuppoſing that every thing expreſſed in this definition is the eſſence of the thing; or, that whatever is not expreſſed in it, is not the eſſence of this thing. An important obſervation occurs on this occaſion.

198. The definition does not repreſent all that the thing defined really is.

The object of this collection of ideas, which forms a definition, is not preciſely the ſame out of our thought as it is there: thus the collection of ideas which forms the definition of a globe, that is to ſay, of a figure perfectly round, and whoſe ſuperficies is in every part perfectly equi-diſtant from a certain point called the *centre*—this object, I ſay, is not, out of our mind, ſuch as it is repreſented by this collection of ideas, as there is no globe exiſting that is perfectly round, and of which all the points of the ſurface are in fact perfectly equi-diſtant from the centre. This eſſence of the globe, that is the object of my thought when I define a globe, is not an object that is, out of my thought, exactly ſuch as it is in my thought: therefore, while we ſo long defined the earth we inhabit to

PART II.

be a globe compoſed of *land* and *water*, this collection of ideas or qualities was not really, out of our minds, ſuch as it was in our minds; ſince it has been diſcovered, that the earth we inhabit is not round, but oval. In like manner alſo with reſpect to man, who is defined a *rational animal*: this eſſence of man, which is here the object of my thought, is not, out of my mind, preciſely ſuch as it is in my thought; for, were it preciſely ſo, it muſt exiſt, out of my mind, the ſame as it in my thought, without any poſſibility of addition or diminution. We however not only may, but muſt, add ſomething to this definition, to make it conformable to what man is out of my thought; for he is not only *a rational* animal, but he is likewiſe a rational animal of ſuch a figure: ſo that, if we were to repreſent to ourſelves a rational animal under the figure of a bear, or a May-fly, we ſhould not repreſent man ſuch as he really is out of our mind; as no eſſence of a man really exiſts under the figure of a bear or May-fly, nor do we even ſee how he could naturally exiſt under the figure of either.

199. Example in the definition of man.

I know it is uſually ſaid, that the figure of a man is no more than a quality, and not his eſſence: but I aſk, whether a man, ſuch as God has really made him, can be found without this quality? It is evident he cannot. It is therefore neceſſarily inſeparable from man, ſuch as God

God has made him. The definition of a rational animal does not therefore fully repreſent the whole man as he really exiſts.

200. The figure of man belongs to his real exiſtence.

If this quality moreover does not really belong to the eſſence of man, why are monſters, of which women have been delivered, declared not to be men, on account of their figure only? Why do we not wait until they have attained to the age of reaſon, that we may ſee whether they are rational animals? On the other hand, why does the human figure alone perſuade us to judge that an idiot is a man, though we never hear him reaſon? Figure, ſhape, or a certain corporeal form, belongs therefore to the real eſſence of man; and man is therefore really ſomething elſe beſides what is expreſſed in the definition of him.

201. The repreſented or metaphyſical eſſence is different from the real or phyſical eſſence.

The eſſence we have in our minds by *the definition*, and which we ſhall for the future call *repreſented eſſence*, becauſe it is nothing but the repreſentation made by the mind of what we judge moſt particular, and immediately applicable, to the things out of our minds—this repreſented eſſence, I ſay, is not therefore the eſſence which I ſhall hereafter name real; for the latter conſiſts in an intimate collection of qualities; and, as thoſe cannot always be perceived, diſtinguiſhed, or expreſſed, it is not preciſely either what is expreſſed by the definition, or

PART II. that eſſence *repreſented* by the definition, which ſome perſons might confound with the *real* eſſence. Philoſophers, however, uſually diſtinguiſh them by different names: one they call *metaphyſical eſſence*, and the other *phyſical*. In order to make a proper uſe of their important diſtinction, we ſhould all remember, that the metaphyſical eſſence is no more than a notion they form to themſelves, ſome frequently one way, and ſome another; as may be ſeen by definitions quite different of the ſame thing, merely according to the particular ideas conceived by each; and, as what they have conceived is not always conformable to the immediate, real, and entire nature of the thing, the metaphyſical eſſence is, generally ſpeaking, much leſs the nature of the thing, than the particular idea formed of it by each. This reflection ſhould leſſen the high eſteem in which metaphyſical eſſence is held by ſome, unleſs they would expoſe themſelves to the danger of taking an idea for a reality.

CHAPTER III.

An enquiry relative to two ideas of eſſence; one of which is attributed to Plato, and the other to Des Cartes.

202. Whether eſſence is eternal and immutable.

THE firſt and moſt ancient of theſe opinions is that aſcribed to Plato; and is, that *the eſſence of every thing is, in itſelf, eternal and immutable.* Let us attentively conſider what is the juſt ſenſe of thoſe terms, which can only be underſtood of a *real* eſſence, or of an eſſence *repreſented.*

203. The real or natural eſſence of God is alone immutable.

If they are underſtood of a real eſſence, we ſpeak of a thing really exiſting at all times whatever, paſt, preſent, or *future.* Now, I know of no being exiſting of itſelf, eternal and immutable, but God, who created all things at a certain time, agreeable to his own will and pleaſure: and therefore there is no eſſence eternal and immutable, except that of God. If Plato really imagined that the eſſences of all things exiſting, are in themſelves eternal, like that of God, he would have taught a falſehood equally impious and manifeſt; the bare mention of which ſhould appear dangerous, inſtead of being uſed as an argument, when we

PART II.

declare that the eſſence of things is eternal, without rightly underſtanding either what we ſay ourſelves, or what was meant by Plato.

204. God can alter the real or natural eſſence of creatures.

Beſides, to ſay that the real eſſence is immutable, is to ſay that God himſelf cannot any way alter things exiſting as he has made them: for this is what we call *real eſſence*. That God, however, cannot any way alter the things he has made, or make them otherwiſe, appears unwarrantable, and is ſetting unneceſſary bounds to divine omnipotence. We cannot therefore ſay, that the real eſſence of things as God has made them, is immutable in that ſenſe.

205. The number of eſſences is not limited.

It cannot be more juſtly ſaid, that the eſſence of things is immutable and eternal, agreeable to the ſenſe of ſome perſons, who imagine that there is no more than a certain number of eſſences, or models of things, according to which all beings are formed, and to which every thing poſſible muſt be referred; ſo that even God himſelf cannot make any beyond this determinate number of eſſences. This again would be giving inconſiſtent bounds to the almighty power of God.

206. The eſſence repreſented is not eternal.

We have now only to examine whether eternity and immutability of eſſence is applicable to repreſented or metaphyſical eſſence, which conſiſts in the idea and particular judgement we form with regard to the real eſſence of things; as when we judge that the eſſence of a man is, to

be

be a rational animal. But, by ſuppoſing eſſence to be ſuch a thought or judgement, eſſence cannot be ſaid to be either eternal or immutable, as the thought and judgement are not ſo. (181.)

207. What is ſuch a thing cannot actually be other than what it is.

If nothing more is meant, than that what we call *man* could never be otherwiſe than *a rational animal*, as what we denominate a triangle could never be any thing elſe but a figure compoſed of three lines and three angles; the propoſition is very true, and of ſuch evident truth, that it appears childiſh to ſpeak ſo myſteriouſly of what is obvious to the eyes of all mankind; for it is very clear, that, if a rational animal is what we call man, man could never be other than *a rational animal*. In fact, as *man* and *rational animal*, in this caſe, preciſely ſignify the ſame idea; to ſay that man could never be other than a *rational animal*, is only ſaying that a *man* could never be any thing elſe but a *man*, and a *rational animal* nothing elſe than a *rational animal*; or, if you will, it is ſaying that *ſuch a thing*, or *ſuch an idea*, could never have been but *ſuch a thing or idea*.

208. The eſſence repreſented muſt often vary.

But to know whether ſuch an idea or judgement as I have formed to myſelf, of a thing exiſting diſtinct from me, or whether any *eſſence repreſented* in my mind, may not, and ſhould not, change with regard to the real eſſence exiſting out of my mind, which I actually wiſh to repreſent to myſelf, and to which it is not always conformable,

PART II. formable, is what cannot be a real ſubject of diſpute: for it is clear, that we ſhould alter a judgement when it is not found true, abandon a defective definition for one that is juſt, and an eſſence, in ſhort, improperly repreſented, for one that is repreſented properly. To take things in this ſenſe, it is evident that nothing is leſs immutable than eſſence.

zeq. Whether God can make a thing to be ſo, and not ſo.

This, perhaps, has given riſe to an opinion directly contrary to that of the followers of Plato, and which, it is ſaid, is the ſentiment of Des Cartes: it is, that the eſſence of things is ſo far from being immutable, that God can change it as he pleaſes, ſo as to make of every eſſence an eſſence intirely different. Thus, though the eſſence of a mountain is to have a valley, God nevertheleſs, according to thoſe philoſopers, can readily form a mountain without a valley: but this is running into another exceſs, which is nothing but empty verboſity; and I am amazed that any perſon could aſcribe it to Des Cartes, unleſs it was with the view of making him ridiculous: for, in ſhort, a mountain without a valley, is a mountain that is no mountain, and which cannot be one; as what we call a *mountain* is a riſing ground, or eminence, of which the bottom is termed *valley*. This would be ſaying, therefore, that God *can make what cannot be made*; and to ſpeak in that manner, is to make uſe of words that

form

form no ſenſe or idea, and which, on the contrary, deſtroy every idea and reaſon. Thus, in what has been advanced by ancient and modern philoſophers, relative to eſſence, we find a confuſion of words, which has occaſioned, at various periods, different confuſions of ideas, that muſt be equally avoided, in order to diſtinguiſh clearly the firſt truths we may diſcover with reſpect to eſſence.

CHAPTER IV.

Of things that are ſaid to have a ſimilar or different eſſence.

210. God can make a being ſimilar to man, with more or leſs powers.

WE clearly conceive that God could make all beings otherwiſe than they are; not in the ſenſe, that any one being might exiſt in a particular manner, and, at the ſame time, not exiſt in that particular manner; (this ſuppoſition would deſtroy itſelf) but in ſuch a ſenſe, that, inſtead of the being which we particularly call man, God could make a being, that, with all the privileges of a man, ſhould have beſides many more; who might, for example, have more than five ſenſes to experience perceptions of which we are incapable, paſs over a hundred leagues in a mo-

PART II.

moment, or ſubſiſt without the common food of man, and poſſeſs a number of other ſimilar faculties.

Again, as ſuch a being would have ſuperior prerogatives to that being we commonly call man, God could likewiſe create a being that might poſſeſs a part of the privileges of man, but not the whole; a being that ſhould never be poſſeſſed of more knowledge than an infant of two years old, and whoſe mind would never be capable of forming any rational concluſion.

211. It would be uſeleſs to diſpute whether they would have different eſſences.

In the ſuppoſition of theſe two new ſorts of beings who ſhould have ſomething ſimilar and ſomething diſſimilar to that ſpecies of being which is man, ſuch as God has made him, it might be diſputed, whether thoſe three kinds of beings would have the ſame, or a different eſſence; and whether the ſame eſſence of man would be common to all three, or each poſſeſs an eſſence peculiar to himſelf: the diſpute, however, would ſolely turn upon words, to know what was meant to be called *ſame eſſence*, or *eſſence of man*. Suppoſe again, that it was agreed to call *eſſence* of man whatever is *a rational animal*, the diſpute would then be confined to other words, to know what is underſtood by *rational animal*; and whether the word *animal* may be applicable to a being that ſhould have the uſe of

more

more than five ſorts of ſenſes, and be capable of ſubſiſting without food; or whether the word *rational* might be applied to a being incapable, as we ſuppoſe, of any regular degree of reaſon; though he ſhould however be, according to the ſuppoſition, of the ſame phyſical conſtitution of an infant of two years old, who has in the main a rational ſoul. The conteſt, I ſay, would turn upon a word; and none would be wrong on either ſide, except as to the word; the one ſaying, that thoſe three ſorts of beings muſt be *different eſſences*, and the other aſſerting, that the three beings form but one *eſſence*: for, by admitting the ſuppoſition, the diſputants would all have the ſame ideas that are expreſſed in it, acknowledging what it admits ſimilar or diſſimilar in the three kinds of beings; ſo that, having all the ſame ideas, they muſt therefore diſpute only about words, in order to find what names are aptly applied to thoſe ideas to which we would give the name of *unity of eſſence*, and others the appellation of *variety of eſſence*. To remove all ſuch perplexity of words, ſo frequently occaſioned with reſpect to *eſſence*, and to form ideas thereof, that may be ſo many firſt truths, all that is neceſſary, is, to keep the following articles conſtantly in remembrance.

PART II.

212. First truths as to what relates to eſſence.

1. The real eſſence of each thing is nothing but the thing itſelf, ſuch as it has pleaſed God to make it. 2. Inſtead of this thing, God might create another that ſhould partake more or leſs of the qualities of the firſt. 3. When God has created a thing, or being, with certain qualities, or prerogatives, in which that thing and the eſſence of it conſiſt, we cannot ſuppoſe God to make it the ſame, without forming it with the ſame qualities, the ſame prerogatives, and the ſame eſſence; as he muſt then make the thing, and not make it, which cannot be ſaid with the leaſt ſhadow of reaſon. 4. The eſſence, which is nothing but the conſtitution of things ſuch as God has made them, is generally impenetrable to our ſenſes and underſtanding, at leaſt in all its extent. 5. Repreſented eſſence, which is the idea of ſeveral principal qualities diſcovered by us in an object exiſting diſtinct from us, is affixed by cuſtom to a certain name: ſo that, if a ſufficient number of thoſe qualities be wanting to authoriſe changing the name of their united body, the eſſence is no longer conſidered the ſame.

CHAP-

CHAPTER V.

Particular obſervations with reſpect to the idea of eſſence, or ſimilar eſſence.

213. The uſe of the name that indicates the eſſence, is often improperly determined.

IN determining the name that ſhould be given to a thing, from certain circumſtances or qualities of the thing itſelf, cuſtom has not always determined preciſely to what degree of change in thoſe circumſtances the thing is to preſerve the ſame appellation: this occaſions a frivolous perplexity in various minds with reſpect to eſſence. Thus, though an orange is ſtripped of the ſkin, cuſtom ſtill leaves it in poſſeſſion of the name of orange: hence it is generally thought, that the eſſence of the orange is not then changed; but, if by preſſure it is deprived of the juice, as it was deprived of the rind by peeling, all agree, that it would then be an orange no longer. With reſpect to its original ſtate, however, its conſtitution or nature has ſuffered a change no leſs real by the loſs of the rind than by that of the juice; but in one caſe the name of orange ſtill remains, in the other not. It is this arbitrary change of name, that, for want of attention, is apt to be taken for a change of eſſence.

PART II.

eſſence. Another ſtriking example of this might be formed from the eſſence of wine, vinegar, and verjuice, which proves that we affix the idea of *eſſence of the ſame thing*, or *of the ſame eſſence*, to certain apparent qualities that are themſelves, by cuſtom, attached to a name in an arbitrary manner.

214. Repreſented eſſence is applicable to many individuals.

Repreſented eſſence is applicable to many individuals; and, on this account, it is called by the name of *ſpecies*; becauſe, as it reſults from the idea of a collection of certain ſenſible qualities, to which collection we have affixed a certain name, and as this very name and thoſe qualities are applicable to many individuals, it is clear that they have thereby the ſame repreſented eſſence; but real or individual eſſence being nothing but the real conſtitution of each being, which in that conſtitution has ſomething particular to diſtinguiſh it from every other being, it is evident, that the real eſſence can be applied to one being, and to one thing, only.

Thus, when we repreſent to ourſelves the eſſence of a circle or a triangle by an abſtracted idea, and judge that every circle or triangle is truely, out of our minds, ſuch as it is then repreſented in our minds, we fall into an error by which we confound the real with the repreſented eſſence; as there really does not exiſt any circle independent of matter, nor any circle materially exiſting

215. We ſhould not confound real eſſences with thoſe repreſented.

exiſting that is perfectly round as it is in our thought by an abſtracted idea, (N°. 49.) which forms, as has been ſaid, *repreſented eſſence* or *ſpecies*. The eſſence of a real circle, exiſting out of our minds, is therefore nothing but the iron, wood, or ink, which exiſts in the figure of a circle that is never perfectly round, and forms a circle exiſting particularly different from every other particular circle exiſting: it is therefore a manifeſt error to give a real eſſence to abſtracted ideas, or repreſented eſſence, that have no other exiſtence but the ſubſtance of our ſouls, of which they are no more than the thoughts or modifications.

The Reader will be, perhaps, ſurpriſed that I have dwelt ſo long upon things that are of themſelves evident, when they are viewed in a proper light; but, though this illuſtration conſiſts only in aſcertaining words or ideas, it will clear up thoſe difficulties which have frequently perplexed or diſturbed minds with regard to eſſence; and are, if I am not miſtaken, the foundation of an ideal philoſophy, which would fain acquire celebrity at the expence of reality, and firſt truths that we ſhould admit with regard to the eſſence of beings. This ſhall be more fully illuſtrated in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

An enquiry into the manner by which the definition explains or contains the nature or eſſence of things.

216. Ambiguity of the word NATURE.

THE principal difficulty we find in rightly comprehending what *nature* is, ariſes from the ambiguity of the word itſelf, or the different ideas that are affixed to it.

It ſignifies, 1ſt, The collective body of all the beings which the human mind is capable of knowing. 2. The univerſal principle that forms and governs that collective body: this principle however is nothing, at bottom, but God repreſented by the word Nature, as he is the principle of life and motion in every thing that affects us by the means of our ſenſes. 3. The particular and immediate conſtitution that makes each being in particular what it is. 4. The diſpoſition which is found in all beings, independent entirely of art and human will; and, in that ſenſe, what is natural is contrary to artificial: thus we ſay, the water-fall that proceeds from a torrent is natural, and the fall of water from a caſcade or fountain in a garden is artificial, as it is the effect of human induſtry. This ſhall be more fully explained

explained hereafter. 5. In fine, the word *nature* signifies the idea we form to ourſelves of what is moſt immediately inherent in each thing, and which we expreſs by definition: this is, as I have ſaid, what is termed in the ſchools *metaphyſical eſſence*; and what I have called *repreſented eſſence*, on which the following reflections may be made. CHAP. VI.

Though philoſophers generally define the definition to be *a diſcourſe that explains the nature of each thing*, it explains, in fact, much leſs the nature of the thing, than the ſignification of the word that indicates the thing. The ſignification, however, of a word that indicates a thing, is far from being the total and complete nature of the thing itſelf. In order to be more fully convinced of this, we have only to conſider, that the name of each thing has been introduced into uſe by the common people, who are far from being philoſophers, and who had no other idea in eſtabliſhing a word, but to make known among themſelves what they actually have in their minds, when they pronounce a certain word.

217. A word makes known a thing without explaining its nature.

It is evident, moreover, that a word by its ſignification may enable us to diſtinguiſh the thing ſignified from all other things, without aſcertaining or explaining its nature. For example, I ſhall readily make known what I underſtand by the word *ſea*, by ſaying, that it is *a collection of*

PART II. *ſalt waters which occupy about one half of the ſurface of the earth*: but, though I make it known in this manner, I neither comprehend nor explain its nature ſo fully as it is comprehended by an angel, or God: an evident proof, that the definition does not explain the nature of the thing in all its extent; but only the ſignification of words, to give a diſtinct idea of the objects we wiſh to treat of.

218. Definition by the genus and difference.

We may here, after the example of Mr. Locke, uſefully analyſe the method eſtabliſhed in the ſchools, of defining by the genus and difference: the *genus* comprehends what the thing defined has in common with other things; the *difference* contains what it has peculiar to itſelf, and in which nothing elſe has any ſhare. This method is no more than a ſupplement to the enumeration of the various qualities of the thing defined; as, when we ſay of man, that he is a *rational animal*, the word *animal* includes the qualities of *moving, living, feeling, &c.* and only ſerves to ſupply the place of enumerating thoſe different qualities.

219. The enumeration of qualities is a kind of definition.

This is ſo true, that, if there be no particular word to expreſs all the qualities of the thing defined, we muſt then have recourſe to the enumeration itſelf of the qualities: for example, if we want to define *a pearl*, it cannot be done by the ſimple expoſition of a preciſe genus and difference, as is ſhewn in the definition of a man; becauſe

cauſe there is no word that, in itſelf alone, includes all the qualities which a pearl has in common with other beings. Thus it happens that the method of defining by the means of the genus and difference, is the compendium or enumeration of the qualities that are diſcovered in the thing defined: but, as what is diſcovered is not the entire nature of the thing, the definition will be found to be nothing but the explanation of the true ſignification of a word, and of the meaning cuſtom has affixed to it; and not of the effective, real, and total nature of the thing indicated by the word. CHAP. VI.

CHAPTER VII.

The difference between the definition of the word and that of the thing explained.

220. Definition of the name, and that of the thing.

FROM what has been ſaid above, a conſequence may be deduced, that requires explanation: it is, that, as all definitions of a thing are nothing more than explanations of the word which ſignifies it, there ſhould be no difference between defining the thing and defining the word; for, to define a word, is but to explain its ſignification; and to define a thing, is

PART II.

likewiſe, according to our principles, only to explain the word that ſignifies it.

221. Their difference is not what many imagine.

In anſwer to this, I ſay, there is a very great difference between what is commonly called *the definition of the name or word*, and the *definition of the thing*, although this difference is not what many people imagine. Both definitions are, in truth, no more than the explanation of the ſignification of a word: but the former is the explanation of a word of eſtabliſhed uſe, agreeable to the ideas mankind in general have been pleaſed to affix to it; whereas the latter is the explanation of a word ſuppoſed arbitrary, which I freely apply as I think proper, without confining myſelf in any reſpect to eſtabliſhed cuſtom on the occaſion; ſo that, according as inclination or occaſion ſuggeſts, I affix to the word the number and quality of ideas which I declare to have actually in my mind. This appears to me ſufficiently plauſible to require no farther illuſtration.

222. The definition of a word explains, in one ſenſe, the nature of the thing.

This definition, however, of a word taken arbitrarily, may in a very juſt ſenſe be called *the nature of the thing defined*; for then the definition perfectly expreſſes the nature of the thing I ſpeak of and define, ſuch as I conceive it; but what I conceive at the time is not always the true nature of the thing indicated by that word, according to eſtabliſhed cuſtom.

Thus,

Thus, when a perſon has defined gravity *a natural tendency of bodies towards the centre*, what has he done? He has explained, as well as he could, the ſignification of the word *gravity*, by expreſſing his ideas of the matter; but, as what he conceived is not at bottom the nature itſelf of the thing, we may ſay that he has given a wrong definition of it, becauſe he has not explained the true meaning of the word *gravity* eſtabliſhed by cuſtom, but only what he in particular conceived by the word, and the idea he affixed to it.

223. Newton.

To give another example. If a man, ignorant of the Engliſh language, ſhould arbitrarily chooſe the word *triangle*, to expreſs the idea of *a circle* he might really have in his mind, and declare, *I mean, by triangle, a round line in all parts equi-diſtant from a certain point*; it is manifeſt that this definition would very aptly expreſs the nature of the thing the man actually had in his mind, which he called *triangle*, and we name *circle* in Engliſh: but we ſhould look upon his definition as a mere *verbal* definition, becauſe he would not have defined the thing indicated by the word *triangle* as it is generally underſtood.

224. The definition of the name is the foundation of geometrical demonſtration.

It is proper, moreover, to obſerve that this nature, expreſſed by the definition of any word whatever, being once ſuppoſed, a chain of conſequences may be thence deduced to form a ſci-

PART II. ence as true as Geometry, which is founded only on verbal definitions; as every geometrician begins with saying, I mean by the word *point* such a thing; by the word *line*, another thing: and by this definition of words, which are so many natures formed by the mind at will, he proceeds to the most profound knowledge, the remoteſt conſequences, and the moſt infallible and evident demonſtrations. It muſt, however, be remembered, that ſuch truths have no other foundation but thoſe imaginary natures arbitrarily formed by the mind, and do not therefore demonſtrate or teach us the actual and true nature of things.

After having aſcertained what conſtitutes the eſſence and nature of beings, as far as the human mind is capable, I flatter myſelf it will be no difficult taſk to diſtinguiſh their other attributes, and particularly their properties.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VIII.

Of properties.

PHILOSOPHERS uſually give the name of property to that which *does not conſtitute the eſſence* of a thing, *but flows and is deduced from its eſſence.* We ſhall endeavour to inveſtigate the exact meaning of this definition, in order to diſcover another firſt truth that is frequently miſunderſtood.

225. Property belongs to the phyſical eſſence.

What has been obſerved in the definition of *property*, that it *is what flows and is deduced from the eſſence*, cannot be underſtood of the real and phyſical eſſence. Suppoſe, for example, as it is generally ſaid, that to be capable of admiring *is a property of man*; this *capacity of admiring* is as inſeparable from, and neceſſary to, man in his phyſical and real conſtitution, as his very eſſence of being a *rational* animal; ſo that he is not, in fact, in any degree more truly *a rational animal*, than he is one *capable of admiring*; and, if you really deprive him of this quality or *faculty of admiring*, you in fact diveſt him of that of being *a rational animal*, as whatever is *a rational animal* is neceſ-

ſarily

PART II.

farily *capable of admiring*; and what is capable of admiring muſt of courſe be a rational animal.

226. Eſſence and property differ only in arbitrary reſpects.

The diſtinction between property and eſſence does not therefore conſiſt in the real nature of beings, but in our conceptions of their neceſſary qualities; ſo that, which ever firſt preſents itſelf to the mind, we conſider as the *eſſence*, and thoſe that do not occur ſo ſoon, or ſo readily, we look upon as properties.

I would not, however, take upon me to ſay, that, in various reſpects, or at leaſt with regard to different minds, what is looked upon as the *eſſence* may not alſo be conſidered as a property: for, among different qualities, equally neceſſary and united together in the ſame being, it is very poſſible that one may occur firſt to ſome minds, and another to others. In that caſe, what is eſſence with the one, muſt be only a *property* with the reſt: this would occaſion a very idle diſtinction, or diſpute. As the quality therefore that conſtitutes the *property*, and that which forms the *eſſence*, are found neceſſarily united; it appears to me, that the eſſence is equally derived from the property, and the property from the eſſence: any other diſtinctions are therefore below the attention of rational minds. We ſhall explain this matter by an example.

Should any one conſider it as the eſſence of the *diamond* to be extremely hard, and its power of reſiſting

reſiſting the violent ſtrokes of a hammer, as a property, I have no objection; but what pretenſions has he to oppoſe me, if I chooſe to call *eſſence* its reſiſtance to the violent blows of the hammer, and its extraordinary hardneſs *a property?* He will ſay, perhaps, that we conceive the hardneſs of the diamond before its power of reſiſting the hammer: my anſwer however is, that I firſt experienced, and conſequently firſt conceived, the power in the diamond of reſiſting the ſtrokes of the hammer; and that thence I drew the concluſion as to its hardneſs, which in that caſe is a ſecondary idea. In this curious diſpute, I ſhould be glad to know whether my opponent or I ſhould have the better of the argument.

The only method of terminating the conteſt in a rational manner, would be to acknowledge that the property is the eſſence, and the eſſence the property; for, in fact, to be hard, and qualified to reſiſt the ſtrokes of a hammer, or being qualified to reſiſt the ſtrokes of a hammer, and being hard, are abſolutely the ſame thing, under different aſpects: the one has no privileges ſuperior to the other, but ſuch as chance, or my imagination, chooſes to give it; and this is all that is neceſſary to diſtinguiſh *eſſence* from *property:* but, if the diſtinction is of ſo little importance, it may be

aſked

PART II.

aſked whether it was an object that merited a moment's attention. To this we anſwer, that the moſt judicious occupation of a Philoſopher is to diſſipate the frivolous objections and difficulties of ſome philoſophers.

CHAPTER IX.

Of qualities.

227. Certain qualities are the eſſence of things, others not.

THE word *quality* is likewiſe apt to occaſion many uſeleſs difficulties, when it is taken in the moſt general ſenſe for the real attributes of a thing; that is, for thoſe inherent peculiarities which are actually found therein, and may be aſſerted of it with truth. Certain qualities are then the eſſence of the things, and others not: thus, to be rational, and capable of admiring, are qualities inſeparable from the real eſſence of man, or really eſſential to man: on the contrary, to be gay or great, to be a poet or painter, are qualities not neceſſarily included in the eſſence of man, ſuppoſing it to conſiſt ſolely in being a rational animal.

228. Whether mode or modification differs from quality.

It is not neceſſary to obſerve here, that all we call *modifications* or *modes of being*, are nothing but qualities; with this difference, that the word *quality*

lity is perhaps more frequently confounded with *the eſſence* of things, than the term *modification* or *mode*; as the latter more expreſsly ſhews, that the eſſence of the thing is already ſuppoſed to be ſo completely formed, that whatever modification is added, may be joined to it, or not, without changing its ſuppoſed natural eſſence. Thus, in ſuppoſing the eſſence of man to conſiſt in being a rational animal, as this eſſence will ſtill ſubſiſt, whether we add or do not add the quality of a poet or painter to it; it is evident that thoſe are no more than ſimple modifications or qualities not eſſential: in like manner, by ſuppoſing the eſſence of the diamond to be its great hardneſs and luſtre after it has been cut and poliſhed, the qualities of red and yellow are to be conſidered only as ſimple modifications belonging to it.

229. Certain qualities form the eſſence by their alternative.

Among qualities, there are ſome whoſe alternative conſtitutes the eſſence of a thing, though each of theſe qualities, taken ſeparately, does not by any means form that eſſence. Thus, though it is a mere modification of matter, to be in motion rather than at reſt; the *alternative*, however, of reſt or motion, is not a ſimple modification, but a quality eſſential to matter.

230. Equivocations with reſpect to the place where qualities are ſituated.

I ſhall take notice elſewhere of what relates to qualities, with regard to the place of their reſidence, in order to examine whether certain qualities, ſuch as form and colour, are in the external object that ſtrikes

PART II. ſtrikes our ſenſes; or in ourſelves who are affected by them. It is really laughable, that a mere equivocation ſhould occaſion ſuch idle diſputes among the philoſophers of our days: this ariſes from the word *quality* being taken both for the diſpoſition in the object adapted to make certain impreſſions on us, and for the impreſſion itſelf that is made on us.

CHAPTER X.

Of unity or the multiplicity of beings.

UNITY is called that which makes a being *one*, and not many; and the idea of *unity* is one of thoſe metaphyſical points, in which men of the greateſt capacity uſually acknowledge the human mind to be loſt, ſuppoſing it a thing impoſſible to be rightly explained.

231. The idea of unity too ſimple to be explained.

I agree in opinion with them, that it is difficult to explain the nature of *unity*: nay more, I will even add that it is impoſſible to explain it; but why? Is it becauſe it is a thing difficult or impoſſible to be comprehended? On the contrary, it is becauſe nothing is ſo eaſy: for, as it is the moſt ſimple idea, and what perhaps firſt occurred to the mind, my

my being *one*, and not *two* men, I immediately annexed to this idea a term which, as it expreſſes the ſimpleſt and plaineſt idea, cannot conſequently admit of an explanation; becauſe an explanation conſiſts in elucidating an idea, by analyſing the more ſimple ideas of which it is compoſed: whatever idea, therefore, is perfectly ſimple, cannot be explained by a more ſimple idea, and conſequently cannot admit of any explanation. We may eaſily explain what a *thouſand* is, to a perſon ignorant of the matter: it is only telling him that it is ten times a hundred; a hundred may be explained by ſaying that it is ten times ten; and, if he knows not what ten is, it is only ſhewing him ten unities on his ten fingers, and one on each: but, ſhould he deſire to have *one* and *unity* explained, then all explanation, even of the moſt ingenious man in the world, ceaſes at once, as there is nothing farther to be explained, there being no more complex ideas remaining; and nothing, conſequently, that can form an idea and expreſſion more preciſe and ſimple than that of unity.

If, with the generality of philoſophers, we define *unity as a thing indiviſible in itſelf, and divided from every thing elſe*; this definition will not furniſh any idea more clear or diſtinct than the unity itſelf defined; and, if the idea of the thing does not become clearer by the explanation, it

cannot

PART II.

cannot be properly called an explanation, nor conſequently a definition; as a definition is nothing but words that explain the nature of a thing.

232. The definition is more obſcure than the thing explained, in ſuch caſes.

It appears evident, moreover, that none of the terms or ideas of the definition are clearer than the word *unity* itſelf. Do I, in fact, more fully comprehend what it is *to be divided from every thing elſe, and indiviſible in itſelf*, than *unity?* And is there not as much reaſon and neceſſity for aſking what is *to be indiviſible in itſelf*, as for enquiring what it is to be one? Is it not even more difficult to explain and comprehend the former than the latter? Doubtleſs it is; nay, the greater part of mankind will not readily underſtand what is meant, when they are told of a thing indiviſible in itſelf; and, if they happen to comprehend it, they never will be able to explain it better than by ſaying, that *to be indiviſible in itſelf is to be one.* To make uſe of any other words, it is plain, would rather perplex than elucidate the matter; becauſe, as has been already ſaid, the moſt ſimple and familiar idea we can form is that of *unity*; and it cannot be otherwiſe expreſſed, but in terms more complicated and obſcure; conſequently the idea of unity can neither be explained, nor defined.

233. People perplex themſelves unneceſſarily with regard to the notion of unity.

But, if the idea of unity is ſo eaſy, why do people daily aſk what it is, and in what it conſiſts? To this it may be anſwered, that men perplex them-

themſelves unneceſſarily; becauſe they do not ſufficiently conſider the nature of the thing about which they deſire information. Can any thing be more frivolous than an attempt to elucidate what is ſuperlatively clear? What, in fact, conſtitutes in us that ſupreme light, the ſource of all other, which is univerſally acknowledged as ſuch? Is it not the perception and knowledge we have of our own exiſtence, which enables each of us to ſay with the fulleſt and cleareſt conviction, *I exiſt, I am, I think?* And this knowledge is in one ſenſe the ſame with, or at leaſt includes, the following: I am *one*, and *not two*; I am *myſelf* alone, and not another: for whoever ſays *myſelf*, ſays *one* to the excluſion of any other, and ſays *one* that is not two. To object to this, would be to object *to any thing being really what it is*; which would be a puerile objection, or rather downright nonſenſe. As, therefore, no perſon can refuſe the title of firſt truth to the ſenſe he has of his own exiſtence, in like manner the idea of unity in himſelf is alſo a firſt truth. CHAP. X.

234. Source of the idea of unity.

Such is evidently the ſource of our idea of unity. I have therefore the cleareſt and moſt intimate idea of unity, and of plurality or multiplicity, which is contrary to it. The matter in itſelf, therefore, can admit of no doubt or per-

PART II.

plexity with thoſe who are unwilling to obſcure or perplex it.

235. Unity is properly applicable to beings only, ſuch as mine.

But an important reflection occurs on this occaſion; and philoſophers might have made the ſame, inſtead of ſpending their time in vain reſearches after the nature of unity, which is neceſſarily known to us; and it is, that this unity, ſo eſſential to us, is properly applicable only to beings ſuch as mine, of which I have the immediate ſentiment by my own exiſtence. *I* alone, I ſay, and other beings like me, can be truely, properly, and formally *one*; as unity, taken in that ſenſe, excludes, in the being in which it is found, every poſſibility of diviſion.

236. What I call ME cannot be divided.

I cannot, in fact, without a degree of folly, imagine that my being, or what I call *me*, can be divided; for, were it poſſible that this *me* could be divided in two, it would then be *me* and not *me* at the ſame time: it would be ſo, as it is ſuppoſed; and would not be ſo, ſince each of the two parties muſt then become independent of the other: one might think, and the other not; that is to ſay, I might think and not think at the ſame time; which deſtroys every idea of *me* and of *myſelf*.

Beſides, this *me*, and all other beings ſimilar to this *me*, in whom *unity* is neceſſarily conceived, and where I cannot ſuppoſe any diviſion without deſtroying their very eſſence, and every idea I can entertain

entertain of them, is what I call an *immaterial* or *ſpiritual* being; ſo that, by deſtroying its unity, you deſtroy its entire eſſence, and every idea of its exiſtence. Divide a thought, a ſoul, or a mind in two, and you have no longer either thought, ſoul, or mind; for who can conceive one half, one third, or one fourth, of a thought, ſoul, or mind? This indiviſibility is, moreover, evident to me by the interior ſenſe of what I am; and, by the efficacy of the ſame ſentiment, I likewiſe learn that what I call *me* is not properly what I call *my body*, as this body may be divided both from me, and in itſelf; whereas, with regard to *me*, I cannot be divided from myſelf.

237. The parts of my body may be ſeparated from me.

1ſt, The ſubſtance of what actually conſtitutes my body, may be divided from me; for, as it is plain that I can exiſt without feet or hands, I muſt conceive that my ſoul from its nature might abſolutely exiſt without each of the other parts of my body; though it ſhould be the brain or the heart, which are, in fact, nothing but matter, like my foot and my hand.

Beſides, can it be ſuppoſed that I am attached to the part called the *heart* or *brain*, when both the one and the other are no more than a collection of various particles of matter, that, after changing and waſting every moment, are continually repaired by nutrition, that is, are conſtantly ſucceeding each other? The collection

PART II.

that now forms what I call my *heart*, will be replaced by another collection ſome time hence; and the actual ſubſtance of my brain and heart, will then conſequently be diſperſed and entirely ſeparate from me; and *I myſelf* ſhall however ſubſiſt. This *me*, therefore, is not eſſentially attached to any particular portion of a diviſible ſubſtance.

238. No part of the body is of a nature ſimilar to *me*.

Hence it manifeſtly follows, that no portion of the body, to which I am and appear to be attached, is of a nature ſimilar to *me*; for it does not conſiſt, like *me*, of *unity*; as all its ſubſtance, and whatever it is compoſed of, may as eaſily be *two* or *three* as *one*. The piece of matter which actually forms my heart is actually one piece; but, without either adding to, or diminiſhing in the leaſt degree the nature of its ſubſtance, it may become *two*, *three* or *four* pieces; ſo that unity, in material and corporeal things, is neither an eſſential nor phyſical quality, but only relative to certain ideas, or a certain appellation; as a portion of matter may ceaſe to be *one*, without changing its natural eſſence.

239. The ſame real ſubſtance is one, or many, in different points of view.

A drop of water is *one*: the very ſame ſubſtance of this drop of water, without being in the leaſt altered, ſhall, if I chooſe, become *two* drops. Let us ſuppoſe a piece of matter two foot long, and that one foot is compoſed of iron, and the other of ſteel: this object or being may be *one* or

two,

two, as you like, according to the idea you ſhall form of it, or the name you pleaſe to give it. If, conſidering it in the whole, you think proper to call it a piece of two foot, it is *one*; but if, diſtinguiſhing each part, you chooſe to call it *two* different pieces that are joined together, it will then be *two*. All other *unities* or *pluralities*, with reſpect to bodies and matter, are of the ſame nature. We denominate *one*, in matter, what we are pleaſed to conſider therein as the term of one of our ideas; but, if we think proper to conſider the ſame object as forming various terms of our ideas, what was *one* will then become *many*: thus a houſe is *one*, becauſe it is the object or term of a total idea, to which we give the name of *houſe*; and the ſame houſe, conſidered as the term of various ideas, by which I therein diſtinguiſh different apartments, ſtones, beams, &c. no longer remains a unity, but then becomes a collection of unities, and is no leſs *multiplicity* than *unity*; becauſe, as it is ſubſtantially diviſible, it may be divided without altering the nature of its ſubſtance.

940. We find as many unities in it as we like.

The ſubſtance of a mountain is in like manner one or many, according as the imagination may be pleaſed to conſider and call it: viewing it in a collective body, we call it *one*; but conſidering it as to the parts that form its ſubſtance, it becomes *many*, and we ſhall find as many

PART II.

unities in it as we may chooſe to divide it into parts: the greater or leſſer cloſeneſs of union that may be between them, can never conſtitute any real unity.

In fact, their union is never cloſer than in the hardeſt body; but, however hard this may be, if it once comes to be ſeparated, the ſame ſubſtance that was conſidered and called *one* piece, is then thought and called *two* or *three* pieces. It may after the ſame manner be conſidered or called *a thouſand*, a hundred *thouſand*, a hundred *millions*, and as many more as the mind chooſes to form ideas of each particular part of the object; ſo that the ſame portion of matter, under different points of view, may be as juſtly deemed or named *one* as a *hundred*: circumſtances that cannot be conceived of a ſpiritual ſubſtance; for, as no mind can be divided, neither can any mind ever be but *one*; and I cannot make me or myſelf the term of two ideas, without deſtroying the idea of myſelf,

CHAPTER XI.

Of identity and diverſity.

241. Identity differs from unity in a certain reſpect as to time and place.

THE identity of a thing is what occaſions us to ſay it is the *ſame*, and no other. Hence it appears that *identity* and *unity* differ only in a certain reſpect as to time and place. A thing conſidered in various places, and at different times, being ſtill found as it was before, is then ſaid to be the *ſame thing*. If you were to conſider it without any difference of time and place, you would ſimply term it *a thing*, or *one thing*; for, with regard to the ſame time and place, we ſay there is *a thing*, and not there is *the ſame thing*.

242. Identity is different in different beings.

We conceive different ideas of *identity* in different beings. We conſider an intelligent ſubſtance always preciſely the ſame, on account of its unity, or indiviſibility; notwithſtanding any modifications that may happen in it, ſuch as its thoughts or ſentiments. One and the ſame ſoul is not leſs preciſely the ſame for experiencing changes of augmentation or diminution with reſpect to thoughts or ſentiments: whereas, in corporeal beings, a portion of matter is no longer ſaid to be exactly the ſame, when it continually receives an increaſe or change in its modifications, ſuch as its form and motion; but if, in a material being, augmented, diminiſhed, or altered,

PART II.

tered, we conſidered any part that remained without alteration, it is evident that, with reſpect to that particular part, it would be ſtill juſtly called *the ſame*.

243. Reſemblance taken for identity.

It muſt be however obſerved, that cuſtom admits an *identity* of reſemblance, which is often confounded with the real identity. For example, when we fill two glaſſes with wine, we ſay it is the *ſame* wine in each glaſs; and when we have two coats made from the ſame piece of cloth, we ſay they are both of the *ſame* cloth. This identity is only in *reſemblance*, and not in *ſubſtance*; for the ſubſtance of the one may be deſtroyed without the leaſt alteration in the ſubſtance of the other. By reſemblance alſo, two things are ſaid to be the *ſame*, when one ſucceeds the other by an imperceptible, but ſtill real change; ſo that they are two ſubſtances entirely different.

244. The ſubſtance of the ſame river changes continually.

Thus the ſubſtance of the river Thames imperceptibly changes every day, and we ſtill call it the ſame river; though the ſubſtance of the water which forms that river, changes and flows off every moment. In like manner, the ſhip of Theſeus continued ſtill to be called the ſame ſhip, when after repeated repairs there did not remain a ſingle piece of timber of which it had been originally built. Again, what we call the ſame body of a man at the age of fifty, contains perhaps no part of the ſubſtance which compoſed the body

of

of the ſame man when the man was no more than ſix months old: this may be clearly ſeen by phyſical experiments with regard to nutrition, which ſhew, that, in material things, there is commonly no more than an identity of reſemblance, that may be miſtaken for an identity of ſubſtance by the equivocal meaning of the word. However trifling this obſervation may appear, its importance may be diſcovered from a reflection of Baile in his Critical Dictionary: he ſhews, that this pitiful equivocation is the foundation of the whole famous ſyſtem of Spinoſa, which ſuppoſes the ſame ſubſtance in all beings;* a foundation ſurely that does infinite honour to thoſe pretended great philoſophers, who, in attempting to riſe ſuperior to common ſenſe, ſtumble at the very firſt ſtep, and ſhew that they do not comprehend their own words, by the firſt propoſition they make in following Spinoſa. Mr. Locke, on the other hand, advances another paradox, which is this: *if a ſpiritual being*, ſays he, *had loſt all remembrance of what it was before, it would be no longer the ſame.* We ſhall examine elſewhere the nature and conſequences of an opinion ſo new and ſingular.

* Baile, Crit. Dict. Art. *Spinoſa*, Letter L.

A thing of which we may deny or affirm what cannot be denied or affirmed of another thing, is diſtinct from that other thing.

To proceed, identity with reſpect to bodies, as I have obſerved, is properly no more than relative to certain particulars, or certain modes of ſpeaking, which occaſion a thing to be called the

PART II.

the *ſame*; though, in the main, the ſubſtance of this thing, reputed the ſame, often changes while it preſerves this relative and nominal identity.

245. Whether particles of matter can poſſeſs an abſolute identity.

Some people have aſked, whether a particle of matter, ſo minute as to be imperceptible to all the ſagacity of our ſenſes, might not ſtill poſſeſs an eſſential and permanent identity. By admitting this ſyſtem, an imperceptible particle of matter would, of itſelf, be the eſſence or ſeed of ſome particular being, and not of any other being. It is ſuppoſed, for example, that GOD had placed, in the ſingle perſon of Adam, a number of particles, as ſo many ſeeds ſufficient to produce all the future generations of men and human bodies that may exiſt in the world: there is, ſay they, no difficulty in this hypotheſis; nor can it be combatted by the difficulty of comprehending how ſuch numberleſs millions of human bodies could have been contained in that of Adam, ſince we have it demonſtrated, that the moſt minute particle may be divided into millions of other particles ſtill leſs, and multiplied beyond any number of men that can ever exiſt in the world. Each particle thus being the ſeed and eſſence of each human body, it might be enlarged and expanded by adventitious parts, and loſe nothing however of its eſſence, its unity, or identity.

This

This ſyſtem appeared convenient to ſome towards explaining, not only the nature and identity of bodies, but likewiſe their ſubſtantial forms, which have been treated of ſo many centuries. But it muſt be obſerved, that thoſe particles of matter, which ſhould be ſuppoſed the ſeed and eſſence of each thing, would, though imperceptible, be always diviſible; as they would be corporeal and material. In their diviſion, however, would they remain the ſeed and eſſence of each thing? If they ſhould not remain ſuch, the identity and eſſence of a thing might then change every moment, ſince the particle that conſtitutes the identity would no longer be preciſely the ſame as before; as the eſſence of a circle is no longer a circle after a diviſion, but only the half, or quarter, &c. of a circle. Thus, after the diviſion of an *identical* particle, there would remain no more than a half, or quarter, &c. of the identity and eſſence. If it be ſaid, that, even after the diviſion of the identity, it ſtill remains the ſame in each of its parts ſo divided; the concluſion muſt be, that, in a ſingle ſeed or identity of human bodies, there will actually be an infinite number of human bodies; and whereſoever chance may throw them, whether upon a ſtone, or an oak, there ſo many human bodies muſt remain.

PART II.

It might be imagined, that Providence had provided a remedy againſt thoſe inconveniences, in placing thoſe identical and eſſential particles, by their extraordinary minuteneſs, out of the reach of other corporeal particles, which, from their unwieldy figure and motion, ſhould have no hold on particles incomparably more delicate; but thoſe delicate particles might they not break and divide each other, even by an accidental colliſion, or mutual ſhock? and would not the identity and eſſence of the ſame body, in that caſe, be diſperſed on all ſides? By that means, the very particle that was but the eſſence of one body, might become, in its diviſion, a thouſand eſſences of the ſame body, which, I muſt own, I have not capacity to comprehend.

If thoſe conſiderations, however, do not ſhew us the identity and eſſence of things, they at leaſt clearly demonſtrate the limits of our underſtanding; for it is abſolutely loſt in this infinite diviſibility of matter, which it is equally impoſſible for us to comprehend or deny. This leads us to ſpeak of infinity, and all that is compriſed therein.

CHAPTER XII.

Of finite and infinite.

IT is diſputed, whether we naturally have an idea of *infinite*. In order to elucidate the queſtion, we may diſtinguiſh, with ſcholaſtics, two ſorts of *infinity*: one is termed *infinity in power*, and the other *abſolute infinity*. The firſt, in my opinion, conſiſts in this, that a being, however great or ſmall it be ſuppoſed, may ſtill be conceived to poſſeſs more greatneſs or minuteneſs than we can conceive, even after the utmoſt ſtretch of thought and calculation. The ſecond infinity conſiſts in a thing having actually and abſolutely ſuch a degree of greatneſs or minuteneſs as is ſuperior to any idea we can form. Some perſons, in other terms which imply the ſame thing, define infinity in power as finite in what it actually is, and infinite in what it may be, or may become: and, on the other hand, abſolute infinity is what, in its entire and actual ſtate, is actually infinite.

Two kinds of infinite.

246. We have an idea of the firſt, but not of the ſecond.

It is evident, that we naturally have an idea of the firſt infinity; for we conceive nothing ſo great, to which we cannot add ſuperior degrees of

PART II.

of greatneſs beyond what are preſent to our imagination: the ſame may be ſaid with reſpect to minuteneſs.

As to the ſecond infinity, it does not appear that we can form any idea of it; for it is impoſſible to imagine an object ſo great, to which we may not, in idea, add new degrees of greatneſs beyond what we have preſent to our imagination.

247. In thinking of God, we form only the idea of infinity in power.

You conceive a God, it will be ſaid, who poſſeſſes this abſolute infinity; but the queſtion is, whether I do conceive him as ſuch. I very well conceive a firſt being, from whom the reſt muſt have derived their being, and who conſequently has from himſelf all that is in theirs: I alſo conceive, that he is poſſeſſed of ſo great virtues and power as are beyond every idea I can form: but this, upon reflection, I find to be nothing but *infinity in power*; whereas, in order to comprehend *abſolute infinity*, I ſhould conceive the full extent of the attributes of God, and the whole of God himſelf, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf: I muſt conceive ſo many attributes in him, as to make it impoſſible for me to imagine more, or a greater number, than I ſhould actually conceive: but this is what I cannot do; for I am ſenſible that I can conceive in God virtues, and degrees of virtues, ſtill greater and greater; and, after conceiving the greateſt number I can poſſibly imagine, it muſt

must still be a determinate number; and, of course, I may imagine another still superior. It is impossible for me, therefore, to conceive so many virtues, but the number or extent of them must still remain finite in my idea; otherwise God would be no greater than I can conceive him, which is directly contrary to what we judge, and ought to judge, of the nature and infinity of God. CHAP. XII.

248. We have not an idea of God that is adequate to the whole extent of the object.

But it will be said perhaps, that, in having once an idea of God, we cannot conceive more virtues than are comprehended under that idea: to which I answer, that we have not this idea of God, such as it is imagined to be by certain philosophers; for our idea is not proportioned to the whole extent of the object which is God. Will it be added, that the idea is then false, since it is not conformable to its whole object? The conclusion is not just: an idea is not false, when the mind of itself conceives an object distinct from it, as fully as it is capable of conceiving it, though it should not conceive whatever may be possibly known of the object in the most perfect extent. An idea is always just, when it enables us clearly to distinguish its object from every other object, by shewing us what it has peculiar to itself. Were there no just or true ideas, but such as enable us to comprehend objects distinct from us, according to the fullest ex-

PART II.

extent of what they are in their nature, and as far as they may poſſibly be known, we ſhould have no true idea; for God alone conceives objects as fully as they can be conceived. If we had, in this ſenſe, a *true idea* of God, we ſhould comprehend God as perfectly as he knows himſelf; and our intelligence would then be infinite like his.

249. Speaking of abſolute infinity, we have no idea but of a thing incomprehenſible.

But it may be aſked, what I conceive when I ſpeak of *abſolute infinity*. Will it be ſaid, that we muſt comprehend it, and have an idea of it, ſince we underſtand one another when we pronounce the words *abſolute infinity*, to which we affix a different meaning from what we do to the words *infinity in power?* But the meaning we affix to abſolute infinity can be nothing but the idea itſelf of abſolute infinity.

The anſwer to this objection is eaſy. By *abſolute infinity* I underſtand an extent ſo great, that I actually ſuppoſe my imagination incapable of making any addition to it: but the ſuppoſition itſelf is falſe; for it is impoſſible for me to conceive in any object ſo great a degree of perfection, as that I cannot add to it in idea or thought. When, therefore, I make uſe of the terms *abſolute infinity*, I mean thereby to expreſs a thing incomprehenſible: I comprehend what I ſay; and what I ſay are words that indicate an object which I acknowledge to be above my com-

comprehenſion. This is the manner in which I understand what I ſay in pronouncing the words *abſolute infinity*. CHAP. XII.

I can readily believe, that this infinity actually and truely exiſts, as I can ſuppoſe or believe the exiſtence of things of which I neither have, nor can have, an idea; in like manner as a man, born blind, ſuppoſes that there are colours, but of which he has no idea; yet he can, and does ſometimes, make uſe of the word *colour*, to denote a thing which is incomprehenſible to him: ſo, in ſpeaking of a ſixth ſenſe which God might have given to man beſides the five with which he has endowed him, I ſpeak of this ſixth ſenſe, though I am ignorant what it might be; and the only idea I have of it, is the idea of ſomething I do not underſtand, and which would be indicated by the words, *ſixth ſenſe*. Thus, I ſpeak both of *abſolute* infinity, and of God who is abſolutely infinite, without being able to comprehend his abſolute infinity, but only an infinity in power, which in him is really an abſolute infinity to me, however incomprehenſible, and of which I have no idea, unleſs of a very great perfection, of which it is impoſſible for me to diſcern the limits, and conceive the extent, without ſtill having an idea of any thing beyond what I conceive of it, though I ſee that there is really ſomething beyond. In like manner, ſays

PART II. Mr. Locke, a pilot, ſounding the ſea with the longeſt cord he can procure, has indeed an idea of a very great depth beyond what he has meaſured; but he has not a true and juſt idea of the preciſe depth of the ſea.

Puffendorf, in his Duties of Man, Book I. Chap. IV. p. 55, makes a reflection on the ſame ſubject, that is alone ſufficient to anſwer every objection; it is in ſubſtance as follows: Though it be juſtly ſaid that God is infinite, this idea we form of him is not however a full and perfect conception; for abſolute infinity does not properly mark any quality that we perceive in the thing itſelf to which we aſcribe it, but only the weakneſs of our own underſtanding, and the incapacity of our mind to comprehend all the greatneſs and extent of the nature and eſſence of ſuch being.

250. Thoſe who ſay that they have an idea of abſolute infinity, contradict themſelves in infinite number.

As to thoſe who pretend they have an idea of abſolute infinity, I would willingly aſk them, when they have comprehended, for example, abſolute infinity in numbers, whether it may not be ſtill poſſible to add another number: if they ſay it is not poſſible, their own conſcience will give them the lye; and if they declare it is poſſible, their pretended abſolute infinity is deſtroyed; as I call abſolute infinity an extent to which nothing can be added, and cannot poſſibly be conceived greater. What is ſaid of abſolute in-

infinity as to number, is equally applicable to every other abſolute infinity.

251. Whether one infinity is greater than another. This is a frivolous queſtion.

This ſhews us how much reaſon is diſgraced by thoſe who argue about matters, of which they neither do, nor can, ſay any thing but what is incomprehenſible. What honour, in fact, do men acquire to themſelves by aſking ſeriouſly, whether one infinity be greater than another? They muſt not even ſee, that the word *greater* is a relative term, uſed to expreſs how far one of two things ſurpaſſes the other, or is ſurpaſſed by it, in a determinate degree known to us: ſo that the greatneſs of things that admit of no determinate degree, is a greatneſs beyond the reach of our comprehenſion, and with regard to which it is evident we comprehend nothing but that it is above our capacity.

But is it not manifeſt, ſay they, that, if there were an infinite number of men, the number of the hairs on their heads muſt be an infinity ſtill ſuperior to that of the men themſelves? To this I anſwer, that, in a limited and determinate number of men, I ſee plainly that there muſt be more hairs than men: but with reſpect to an infinite number of men, a thing above my comprehenſion, I am as much at a loſs to conceive the attributes of which it is or might be ſuſceptible; and conſequently I do not ſee, neither can I ſee, whether it is ſuſceptible of more or leſs;

PART II. as I never could aſcertain the more, or the leſs, but by finite numbers that are within the compaſs of my underſtanding. Nothing is, I think, more capable of giving a wrong turn to the mind, and introducing falſe arguments, than abſurd diſcuſſions of this kind; for, by endeavouring to exerciſe our rational faculties on ſuch matters, we are gradually led to miſtake chimeras for reaſon, and reaſon for chimeras: whereas, by ſolely confining ourſelves to things within the reach of our capacity and underſtanding, we are enabled, by a little attention and care, to diſtinguiſh true ideas of things from falſe, ſo as to acquire ſure guides in all our opinions, and for every part of our conduct. I may venture to ſay, that it is for want of adhering to this maxim, that libertiniſm and extravagant opinions have ravaged the minds of ſo many. This conſideration leads us to regret the time ſpent by many philoſophers in debating queſtions; eſpecially when they neither diſcerned nor acknowledged this firſt truth, that abſolute infinity is an object which it is impoſſible for our finite capacity ever to comprehend, and of which a judicious man ſhould ſay nothing but that it is incomprehenſible to his underſtanding.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XIII.

Of what is poſſible and impoſſible.

252. Poſſibility is infinity.

POSSIBILITY, in its fulleſt extent, ſhould be joined to the article of infinity; for, by conſidering that whatever is poſſible is ſuch that it is impoſſible to conceive more of it, it is evident, in ſuch reſpect, that poſſibility is infinity; nay, it is even the infinity of the power of God.

253. Whether all that is poſſible can exiſt.

Our Readers muſt not wonder, after what has been laid down in the preceding chapter, if we are at a loſs to anſwer this queſtion, *Can every thing that is poſſible exiſt?* For taking poſſibility thus, in all its latitude, whatever anſwer we may give, it will remain an abyſs impenetrable to the mind. If it be ſaid, that whatever is poſſible cannot exiſt, from that very circumſtance it is not then poſſible: if, on the other hand, it be declared, that whatever is poſſible can exiſt, we may then ſuppoſe its exiſtence. Now, according to this ſuppoſition, nothing will be poſſible beyond what muſt exiſt by the ſuppoſition, which appears evidently falſe: for, in ſhort, how great ſoever the number of things may be that

PART II.

ſhould exiſt, a poſſibility will ſtill remain, as omnipotence can never be exhauſted; and conſequently all the poſſibility that might be ſuppoſed to exiſt, would not however exiſt.

This then is what our mind cannot aſcertain; becauſe, as poſſibility is *infinity*, it is above the reach of our underſtanding, which is loſt and confounded in ſuch contemplation.

254. What kind of argument is this? God is poſſible, therefore he exiſts.

We may here palpably ſee the weakneſs of that pretended demonſtration of the exiſtence of God, which has exerciſed the thoughts of ſo many, either in attacking or defending it. The diſpute perhaps is ſtill ſubſiſting, for want of the reflection made here. When Des Cartes endeavoured to prove the exiſtence of God, that is, of a being actually infinite, he argued thus: *God exiſts, if it be poſſible:* it is poſſible; therefore he does exiſt.

255. An infinite being poſſible is an object that we do not comprehend.

I know the various anſwers given to this argument; but I think the ſhorteſt and moſt plauſible may be drawn from what I have advanced with reſpect to poſſibility. In fact, when I am told that an infinite being, conſidered as an abſolute infinity, *is poſſible*, my mind is equally loſt in the ſubject and attribute of the propoſition; for both the term *infinite*, and the word *poſſible*, taken in all their latitude, are objects, by their infinity, beyond the utmoſt reach of my capacity. As I have therefore no comprehenſion of them,

them, I know neither what to deny nor affirm with reſpect to them. We may thence likewiſe diſcern the fallacy of the following argument: *An infinite being is poſſible, as it is not impoſſible; and it is not impoſſible, as we can diſcern no impoſſibility in it:* for, in ſhort, the thought of a mind ſo limited as ours cannot juſtly aſcertain whatever is poſſible or impoſſible. As poſſibility and impoſſibility, in their utmoſt latitude, are infinite, they manifeſtly ſurpaſs the reach of our underſtanding, which is loſt and bewildered therein. It is therefore clear, that, with reſpect to the infinite being conſidered as ſuch, and with regard to his poſſibility, our mind can neither affirm nor deny any thing, without being guilty of raſhneſs and preſumption.

256. Poſſibility that is not infinite is within the reach of our capacity.

Some people are deceived with regard to *poſſibility*, becauſe it may be either conſidered in its utmoſt extent, or confined to particular and finite objects, the ideas of which do not ſurpaſs our underſtanding. In the latter point of view we might judge of the poſſibility of a being. We muſt however be very circumſpect as to the various meanings of which the word *poſſibility*, or the contrary term *impoſſibility*, is ſuſceptible.

257. Three ſorts of impoſſibility. 1ſt. Of formal ſuppoſition.

Scholaſtics diſtinguiſh three kinds of impoſſibilities, which it is proper to conſider. 1ſt. An impoſſibility in conſequence of a ſuppoſition or hypotheſis. This relates to a thing poſſible in

PART II.

itſelf, but impoſſible in conſequence of a ſuppoſition that has been formed, and is ſtill continued: for example, it is very poſſible I may walk out to-morrow; but if I ſuppoſe that I ſhall not walk out, and that God, who is omniſcient, foreſees that I ſhall not go out, it is, according to this ſuppo tion, impoſſible for me to walk out to-morrow, as the ſuppoſition includes an impoſſibility; but that I may go out to-morrow, whilſt it is ſuppoſed at the ſame time that I ſhall not go out a walking to-morrow; again, it is very poſſible that I may be actually ſtanding at preſent; but, if it be ſuppoſed that I am actually ſitting, it is conſequently impoſſible, according to this ſuppoſition, that I ſhould be actually ſtanding.

The ſecond impoſſibility reſembles the firſt, and only exiſts under certain regards, or tacit ſuppoſitions: thus it is impoſſible for me to be deceived by the united evidence of my ſenſes, when the organs of thoſe ſenſes are in proper order; but it is with reference to the natural order of things that the ſuppoſition is tacitly made: when I therefore ſay, that it is impoſſible for what I have now before my eyes not to be writing, I tacitly ſuppoſe that God does not actually perform a miracle.

258. The definition of an abſolute impoſſibility is liable to error.

The third impoſſibility is the only abſolute impoſſibility, and that can be properly ſo called: it

it is commonly defined, *that which implies a contradiction.* This definition is ſuppoſed to be ſo clear, that it can admit of no ambiguity: it gives riſe, however, to an important and frequent error. In fact, we miſtake ſometimes what includes a contradiction, for what appears to us to imply a contradiction; and, on other occaſions, that which does not appear to include a contradiction, for what in reality includes none.

259. The perpetual motion demonſtrated to be poſſible in ſpeculation.

A man invented a very ingenious machine for the diſcovery of the perpetual motion, and challenged all the learned to ſhew any impoſſibility or contradiction in the invention. In order to juſtify his ſyſtem, he adduced demonſtrations equal to the cleareſt geometrical proofs. For completing the machine, nothing remained wanting, but an artiſt that could make a piece of leather capable of ſuſtaining a certain weight of quickſilver: this workman however is ſtill to be found. But, is it not in that very article itſelf that really conſiſted the contradiction, which was neither in the mind of the machiniſt, nor of thoſe who thought his project demonſtrated? What was in their fancy was a demonſtration; but there was a ſomething in the reality, that was not in their minds. They ſuppoſed leather might be had capable of ſuſtaining a certain weight of quickſilver; it is only making the leather ſtrong enough, ſaid they: but, while ever it is leather, it

PART II.

it will be too weak to ſupport the weight of quickſilver: it would be neceſſary therefore to have leather that ſhould not be leather, at leaſt naturally, though the mathematician ſuppoſed it ſuch naturally; for he did not ſeek the perpetual motion by virtue of a preternatural power; thus there were both contradiction and impoſſibility in the thing and reality, though neither was in the mind.

260. A thing does not ceaſe to be impoſſible, though we may ſee no contradiction in it.

It is the ſame with regard to a thouſand objects diſtinct from us, that are not intimately known to us. We thence form combinations which we boldly aſſert to contain no contradiction, becauſe it is impoſſible for us to diſcover any: but, if the firſt cauſes that conſtitute the nature of things, were fully preſent to our minds, we ſhould often perceive an incompatibility we do not diſcern, as we ſee not their ſenſible qualities: for thoſe are often united to other inſenſible qualities above our capacity; and we cannot judge of their reciprocal relation or incompatibility. Chymiſts ſee no contradiction in the tranſmutation of iron into gold: neither do I; but I cannot therefore take upon me to ſay that there is none: it would be neceſſary for me to attain to the knowledge of the firſt radical particles that conſtitute both iron and gold, and the reſpective nature of each, that I might diſcover whether it can be naturally common to thoſe two metals: if

it

it cannot, it is a contradiction to ſay that iron may be naturally changed into gold. Beſides, I cannot judge whether this be poſſible, unleſs experience comes, which is not yet come, or at leaſt is very dubious; and therefore I cannot decide with certainty whether there be any contradiction or not in ſuch a tranſmutation. When, therefore, people affirm poſitively that no impoſſibility is to be found in this matter, it is only ſaying that they can ſee none: but it does not therefore follow, but that ſuch impoſſibility may actually exiſt; for, though the ideas we at preſent form in our minds, both of gold and lead, are not incompatible, and by no means mutually deſtroy each other, they do not ſhew us what gold and lead are, according to the whole extent of their nature.

From thoſe principles it follows, that, with reſpect to all beings, particularly thoſe diſtinct from, and not intimately known to us, we cannot deduce this conſequence, *I ſee no contradiction therein, therefore there is none:* and this we ſhould admit as a firſt truth.

261. We cannot ſee a *contradiction* or impoſſibility in a thing if it be above our capacity.

But, if I ſee a contradiction and impoſſibility, may I not then conclude that there are ſuch, in fact? Yes, if you ſee them; but, in order to be convinced that you ſee them, the object muſt be within the reach of your capacity. Thus, when the Socinians find a contradiction in what religion

PART II.

religion teaches us of the myſtery of the Trinity, they judge contrary to the very rules of natural reaſon: for religion propoſes this myſtery to us as being the infinite nature of God himſelf, which is above the utmoſt reach of our comprehenſion; and natural reaſon directs us not to judge of objects beyond our capacity.

262. Le Clerc has made choice of a wrong example of contradiction.

In like manner, Le Clerc, in his logical work, has made a very injudicious choice of an example of contradiction, in the multiplication of the ſame body, ſuch as catholics believe it in the myſtery of the Euchariſt: for, without mentioning the multiplication of the loaves, that the goſpel obliges us to admit; as one and the ſame body multiplied, is in a ſupernatural and miraculous ſtate, it is conſequently beyond the natural reach of our underſtanding; and it is not in thoſe reſpects ſuch as we repreſent it to ourſelves by a natural idea, which is always defective with regard to a ſupernatural object.

If other authors had made this reflection, with reſpect to the myſteries of religion, they would have avoided many arguments with which they captivated ſuperficial minds, but which can have no difficulty when men are capable of penetrating and diſcovering firſt truths, and the firſt ideas that are acquired by a juſt analyſis of our thoughts.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIV.

Of what is perfect or imperfect.

263. Whether the idea of perfection is clear.

ACCORDING to ſome philoſophers, nothing is more natural to the mind than the idea of *perfection*; and it is ſo clear, that no one can be miſtaken in it. In order to be convinced that their thoughts are juſt, we ſhould firſt ſee them endeavour at leaſt to explain certain ambiguities which manifeſtly occur in the word *perfect* or *perfection*.

264. To be perfect is to accompliſh the end for which the thing is intended by its author.

No perſon will, I think, diſpute that the moſt proper meaning of the word *perfect* is, to expreſs the nature of a work which poſſeſſes in itſelf ſufficient qualities for accompliſhing the ends for which it was deſigned by its author. Thus verſes compoſed to pleaſe, are perfect if they actually pleaſe: a houſe built for lodging commodiouſly, is perfect if it really be commodious for lodging. In like manner, a man created for the purpoſe of devoting himſelf entirely to the knowledge and ſervice of God, is perfect if he be entirely employed in that divine occupation.

265. This definition is not ſuitable to God.

But this definition of *perfect*, the cleareſt perhaps, and the moſt preciſe that can be given, is by no means ſuitable to God: for, 1ſt, God is not

PART II.

a *work*. 2dly, He has not been *created* or *deſigned* by an author, as he could have none: whatever he does, or may do, is always that he was deſigned for, if we may ſo expreſs ourſelves; though, to ſpeak properly, we ſhould never uſe ſuch expreſſions. We ſhould therefore ſeek, with reſpect to God, an idea of perfection that is by no means the moſt common and plauſible idea affixed to the word *perfect*.

266. What is perfection in God.

Thus in God we call perfection each of the attributes we eſteem and think we ſhould ſuppoſe in him. We might with ſtill greater preciſion call perfection in God the collection of all his attributes; for, were we to ſuppoſe any one of them ſeparate from the reſt, we ſhould not find perfection in God: ſo that here are, of God himſelf, two ideas of perfection. In fine, we ſuppoſe all thoſe attributes in God in ſo eminent a degree as to ſurpaſs all our conceptions: and this again is a third idea of perfection in God. Thoſe ideas of perfection are not therefore ſo eaſy or ſimple, as ſome people would fain imagine: for in a *ſimple* idea there is nothing that requires diſtinction or explanation; and every attempt to diſtinguiſh or explain it, only ſerves to involve it in perplexity and confuſion.

267. Perfection is what we ſuppoſe ſhould be in every thing.

What is, however, common to the three ideas of perfection we have diſtinguiſhed in God, muſt be obſerved; that is, we ſuppoſe they ſhould be

in

In God: and even this again furniſhes us with an idea of perfection that is both juſt and plauſible; that is, we call *perfection all we ſuppoſe ſhould be in each thing*, and that is ſuitable to it.

Thus, if we ſuppoſe that a circle ſhould be compoſed of a line equally diſtant in every part from the centre, we call a circle perfect that is actually ſo formed. Though we ſuppoſe that a man ſhould have two hands, and five fingers on each hand, we do not conſider him perfect, however, whether he has one hand or three, whether each hand has four fingers only, or ſix. Again, ſuppoſing that a monſter ſhould have ſomething very extraordinary: if a man were to be found with a hundred hands like Briareus, and his whole body covered with eyes like Argus, or any thing ſtill more frightful, we ſhould then ſay this is a perfection; the *perfection* indeed of a *monſter*, but ſtill a perfection, as we ſhould find in the monſter all that we ſuppoſe ſhould be in him, and is ſuitable to ſuch a being.

263. Whether perfection is ſuch, that nothing can be added to it.

Some perſons imagine they elucidate the idea of perfection taken in a general ſenſe, by ſaying, that *perfection* is an advantage to which we can neither make nor deſire any addition: but, in that ſenſe, perfection is nothing elſe but infinite felicity; as it is to that alone we can neither make nor deſire any addition: and, as we have obſerved, that infinity is an object of which the human

PART II.

human mind can have no comprehenſion, it will be a taſk no leſs difficult for us to comprehend perfection.

269. Whether perfection is preferable to the contrary.

After theſe definitions nothing remains but to examine that which is commonly uſed in the ſchools, where it is ſaid, *perfection is that which, in itſelf, is preferable to the contrary, or its privation.* This definition, which appears ſo clear and preciſe to ſome people, is not, I think, ſo much ſo as it is commonly ſuppoſed; for, when we thus talk of perfections, it is plain that we ſpeak of qualities one of which is preferable to the other. Let me then aſk, whether it be only in particular reſpects, or on certain occaſions, that the one is preferable to the other? If a quality be thus found perfection only in certain reſpects, it will no longer remain a perfection in itſelf, and by its own peculiar nature; what is ſo by its nature, and in itſelf, cannot ceaſe to be the ſame on any occaſion, or in any reſpect whatever: but if, independent of every occaſion, ſuppoſition, and reſpect, it ſhould be aſked, Which is preferable in itſelf, reſt or motion, action or inaction? I think the queſtion muſt either be incomprehenſible or frivolous; for action and inaction are preferable to each other only with reſpect to certain beings, times, places, and circumſtances, in which action or inaction, motion or reſt, may be found: ſo that, with regard to cer-

certain beings or times, action or motion, would be preferable; and they would be the reverſe with reſpect to certain other beings and times. We muſt therefore find out qualities of ſuch a nature as are, independent of every reſpect and all occaſions, preferable to what are the contrary. Firſt then, it is certain that there are none of this nature in corporeal things, with reſpect to which ſoft, in itſelf, is not preferable to hard, long to broad, motion to reſt, &c. We muſt therefore neceſſarily allow, that, in regard to them, there are no perfections but what are either relative, or built upon ſuppoſition, as I have already explained them; that is, with reſpect either to the uſe for which they are deſigned, to the arbitrary eſteem in which they are held by men, or to certain names or expreſſions that have been introduced as it were by chance. CHAP. XIV.

270. What quality, taken in itſelf, is preferable to the contrary.

With reſpect to minds, it appears that there are qualities which it is better to poſſeſs than not; but, if we conſider rightly, we ſhall find that, excepting one only, they are not ſuch abſolutely in themſelves, but always with a reference to another quality, which alone it is abſolutely better to have than not; and that in every reſpect whatever, under every ſuppoſition that can be formed, and in all circumſtances in which it may be conſidered; and this quality is *to be happy*, as fully and as long as poſſible. Such is, I ſay, the

PART II.

only abſolute perfection that is preferable to its contrary, with reſpect to all, in every reſpect, on all occaſions, and in all circumſtances that can poſſibly be ſuppoſed.

271. Immortality a perfection relative to happineſs.

Should it be aſked, for example, whether it is better for a mind to be *immortal* than *mortal*; I would directly anſwer, Yes, it would, from the diſpoſition of all men to annex the idea of miſery to death; becauſe, in the ſtate they are in, it is, in fact, a pain and misfortune to them to die, as they are attached to a life they love to preſerve. From a ſimilar cauſe likewiſe, they join the idea of immortality to happineſs; but, if I ſeparate them, and unite the idea of immortality with miſery, I then alter my opinion, and naturally conform it to the oracle of Jeſus Chriſt, relative to a wicked man deſtined by the Author of Nature to be immortal, and by his own tranſgreſſions to be miſerable; and I will ſay, after the truth incarnate, that it would have been not only better for that man not to have been immortal, but that he never had been born: *melius ei eſſet, ſi non natus fuiſſet.* As therefore immortality, in a certain reſpect, may become much more fatal than mortality, it is not true that immortality, taken in itſelf preciſely and abſolutely, is preferable to mortality; for what is ſo, in itſelf, abſolutely, can never ceaſe to be the ſame, under all circumſtances, and in every reſpect whatever.

Immor-

Immortality then, in certain circumſtances, and in a particular reſpect, is not preferable to the contrary quality. Immortality conſequently is not an abſolute perfection, but only a perfection in reference to felicity, which it ſuppoſes, to which it relates, and of which it is conſidered as a part or continuation.

272. Wiſdom, power, and means of felicity.

I might ſay as much, in proportion, of wiſdom and power, if it were poſſible to conceive them diſtinct from happineſs: but that would be a chimera; for thoſe qualities are either felicity itſelf, conſidered under different faces, ſuch as they are in God, or qualities united with happineſs, either for acquiring or enjoying it: for, to ſpeak only of created beings, which are more within the reach of our capacity, what is *wiſdom* with reſpect to them, if it be not a quality that urges them to purſue the road leading to the ultimate and true end of every ſpiritual being, which is happineſs, according to the unanimous opinion of philoſophers? Wiſdom is then a diſpoſition to attain happineſs, or to enjoy it; and what would really be a wiſdom that ſhould lead us to real miſery, or be capable of continuing us in it? Would it not then loſe all title to the name of wiſdom?

This is more ſtrongly evinced with reſpect to power, knowledge, and other ſimilar qualities. It is certain, that we look upon them as perfec-

PART II. tions no farther than as they may contribute to our ſatisfaction and happineſs. Should we really be more perfect, for being inveſted with power, or enlightened by knowledge, that would contribute nothing to our happineſs, or that would only ſerve to make us miſerable? Is it not better, for example, to be deprived both of power and underſtanding, than to poſſeſs them in the ſame manner as the infernal ſpirits, in whom thoſe qualities ſerve only to revive and augment continually their rage and deſpair? But if theſe qualities were, eſſentially in themſelves, and by their nature, preferable to the contrary, it would be impoſſible to ſuppoſe or imagine any circumſtance in which it would be more eligible not to have either knowledge or power than to poſſeſs them. In like manner, a circle being in itſelf abſolutely round by its eſſence and nature, it is impoſſible to ſuppoſe or imagine any reſpect or circumſtance in which a circle is not round: from a ſingle circumſtance of that kind, a circle would not be round eſſentially, and of itſelf. As there are then circumſtances in which it would be better not to poſſeſs either power or knowledge, than to have them, thoſe two qualities are not eſſentially ſuch as to make it more eligible to have them than to be deprived of them; but they are ſuch only in a certain reſpect, that is, relative to the idea we have that know-

knowledge inſtructs, as to the means of acquiring happineſs; and power puts us in poſſeſſion of them. CHAP. XIV.

Hence, what is preferable to the contrary, abſolutely in itſelf, eſſentially, and independent of every reſpect and circumſtance, and conſequently what ſhould only and ſtrictly be eſteemed *abſolute* perfection, is happineſs alone, and what contributes thereto.

273. Felicity is not of ſhort duration.

Felicity, however, is not confined to a content and ſatisfaction ſuch as we are ſenſible of in this world, where we find by experience, that ſomething is always wanting, or to be wiſhed for. A greater happineſs is preferable to the contrary, that is, to a leſs happineſs; therefore felicity is not an abſolute perfection, unleſs in ſo exalted a degree as to be preferable to every other degree; and a degree ſo exalted is what ſurpaſſes all our ideas; it is a degree that is infinite and beyond our comprehenſion: for, could we comprehend it, it would thence be finite, and we ſhould be able to meaſure, compare it, and diſtinguiſh a degree ſuperior to it; therefore it would not be abſolute perfection.

What is ſaid as to the degree of happineſs, muſt be underſtood of its duration; whence I conclude, that perfection, the only abſolute perfection, taking it ſtrictly and preciſely according

PART II.

to the definition, is eſſentially preferable to its contrary, and conſiſts in ſupreme and eternal felicity.

274. The idea of perfect little underſtood by ſome perſons.

In thoſe reflections relative to perfection, I fear that ſeveral philoſophers will not perceive their uſual ideas of this object; but I know not what thoſe among them will think, who found a proof of the exiſtence of God on the term ſo equivocal, and the idea ſo indeterminate, as that of *perfection*, when they ſay, that God is a collection of perfections; that the collection of perfections is poſſible; and that, as it is poſſible, it muſt exiſt; for, if it did not exiſt, it would not be poſſible. We may ſee this argument contains much ambiguity in the word *perfection* or *perfections* in God; for, after what has been urged, this pretended demonſtration can mean nothing more than that it is impoſſible but a being ſupremely and eternally happy muſt exiſt: but, in addition to what is uſually advanced in order to explain this ſophiſm, we will further ſay, that the *perfection* we are here ſpeaking of, as well as *poſſibility* and *eternity*, are ſo many infinities of which our narrow and finite minds can form no clear idea; as they cannot judge clearly but of objects proportioned to their capacity, and the extent of their knowledge, which are very far from being infinite.

To

To conclude this article; *perfection*, in inanimate things, is no more than what is ſuppoſed beſt adapted to the ends for which they are deſigned: and, in ſpiritual beings, perfection is nothing elſe but true happineſs, and what is ſuppoſed to lead more directly to it, or to render it more durable and complete.

CHAPTER XV.

Of good, or what is good.

IF a proper attention be given to what has been before obſerved with regard to *perfect* and *perfection*, little will be neceſſary to be ſaid as to the nature of *good* and *goodneſs*. *Good* and *goodneſs* then is nothing but what makes us happy, or contributes to it.

275. Good relates to perfection.

If it be not already clear to the Reader how far this definition is applicable to all that is termed *good*, a few reflections will aſſiſt us in explaining our ideas of the ſubject.

Of whatever thing we ſay *it is good*, it is always with reſpect to an end. When God ſaid, with regard to the creatures he had newly made, *he ſaw it was good*, we cannot doubt but theſe

276. What is good is relative to an end which is happineſs.

PART II.

words meant, *it was proper, and adapted to the end God propoſed.*

It is the ſame in the moſt common and ordinary matters: for example, when thoſe who are no philoſophers ſay, *this wine is good*, or *that ſword is good*, it is ſtill with a view to ſome end: this wine is good; that is to ſay, this wine is proper, and adapted to give me pleaſure and health by drinking it: *that ſword is good*; that is, it is properly made for repelling an enemy, or defending one's ſelf againſt him. With a little attention we ſhall find, that we never uſe, nor can we rationally uſe, the word *good*, but to ſignify that a thing is proper for a certain end which we have, at leaſt tacitly, in our minds.

277. The general end is to be content.

Now the end we always have tacitly in our minds, is to be content and ſatisfied, either in procuring a good, or avoiding an evil, which is at bottom a real good, as the firſt degree of happineſs is to be exempt from evil.

It frequently happens therefore, that the ſatisfaction we have tacitly in view does not appear in the near end, which is actually in the mind: but this near end, in the main, is no otherwiſe conſidered but as leading to ſatisfaction and ſome degree of happineſs. A painter goes to a colour-man: For what purpoſe? To buy colours. Why colours? To grind and blend them together with oil. And wherefore does he blend them?

To

To ſpread them on canvaſs with his pencils and bruſhes, in order to form a picture for ſale, that he may acquire money and reputation. At every ſtep we perceive an end; and each end leads to another, until the laſt mentioned. And to what purpoſe money and reputation? Becauſe they procure us pleaſure, content, and ſatisfaction, as far as we are capable of enjoying them in our preſent ſtate.

In every end therefore, leading to another, we ſtill find *good*; and the good will never be found but with reſpect to ſatisfaction, which is the general end. If we therefore ſuppoſed that a particular being could no way contribute to the ſatisfaction of any one, he would, on that very account, forfeit all pretenſions to character, and every degree of goodneſs.

228. Whatever exiſts is good.

It is thus we muſt underſtand philoſophers when they ſay, *whatever is, is right*; that is, it contributes to happineſs, either directly or indirectly: we do not always ſee in what manner; but the Creator ſees it. Again, beſides the ſatisfaction that may thence reſult to mankind, the glory of God is always manifeſted therein, which is the only good of which we can preſume to judge the Supreme Being ſuſceptible.

229. What is virtuous, uſeful, and pleaſing.

It will be aſked perhaps, what difference there is between what is commonly called right or honeſt, and what is called good or *uſeful*; as both

PART II.

both muſt give us ſatisfaction. The difference is, that what is *honeſt* or virtuous ſatisfies us with regard to conſcience and reaſon, and is a laſting and ſolid good, not ſubject to painful diſappointments; whereas the good commonly ſtyled *uſeful*, when it is contrary to honeſty and virtue, ſatisfies cupidity, and is expoſed to diſguſt and anxiety. If the ſatisfaction derived from what is uſeful be ſtrong, but of very ſhort duration, we then commonly give it the epithet of *pleaſing*; nevertheleſs, ſtrictly ſpeaking, every good is truely *uſeful*, as it contributes to our ſatisfaction more or leſs, one way or another, either for a time, or for eternity.

280. Every individual thinks of himſelf in what he calls a good.

It is therefore proper to obſerve here, that the word *good* is very equivocal, as it equally ſignifies different kinds of goodneſs, which are not diſtinguiſhed. As every man in particular thinks of himſelf preferably to all others, he calls good or goodneſs only what contributes to his own particular happineſs; but, as happineſs belongs to all men who are united by ſocial bands, we ſhould not, I think, call any thing *good* or goodneſs *poſitively*, unleſs it contributes to the general happineſs of all men, or does good, and appears good to all. When the words are not taken in that ſenſe, we ſhould never diſpute about them; for if, of the ſame object, one ſays it is *good*, and another that it is *not* good, they

are

are both right: it is no more than if one ſhould ſay, *this object is good for me*, or *pleaſing to me*; and the other, that *it is not good for him*, or is *diſpleaſing to him*; which is equally true with reſpect to the two perſons who ſay ſo.

281. The word true, or real, ſometimes taken for the word good.

The word true or real ſometimes takes the ſignification of the word *good*, as when we ſay real or good gold, a true or real pearl, &c. This is nothing but a mode of expreſſion to ſignify that the properties to which we have affixed the name of *pearl*, as whiteneſs and clearneſs, are ſuitable to a thing we are actually indicating: this, at bottom, ſignifies nothing but that ſuch an object deſcribed is *truely*, that is, actually, a pearl; ſo that cuſtom only adopted the word true to diſtinguiſh things to which we give a certain denomination, in conſequence of ſuch various properties as are ſuppoſed in it—to diſtinguiſh them, I ſay, from thoſe which might have only the appearance, or a part of thoſe properties, without having them really or entirely. Thus we ſay a real or *true* diamond, ſpeaking of that which has all the properties we commonly unite with the idea indicated by the word *diamond*, ſuch as its brilliancy and hardneſs: and, on the other hand, we call falſe or counterfeit what may have the brightneſs and appearance of the diamond, but not the hardneſs or ſome other qualities which we ſuppoſe eſſential to a diamond. But this ſubject does not merit further diſcuſſion.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XVI.

Of order.

282. It is not uſual to inveſtigate the idea of order.

I AM ſurpriſed not to find the ſubject of this article commonly treated like many others in metaphyſical works: I know not whether there is one that has a juſter claim to notice in the inveſtigation of firſt truths, and of the principles of human knowledge: there is, in fact, no idea that can be leſs diſcerned by anterior knowledge, nor whence a greater variety of knowledge may be deduced, either for ſpeculative ſcience, or the conduct of life.

283. Order defined.

I have ſeen order defined by ſome, as *an arrangement of things*, or *a juſt diſtribution of parts*: but it happens on this occaſion, as on many others, that the definition itſelf wants explanation as much as the thing defined; for I aſk, in what *this arrangement of things conſiſts?* What muſt be done, that the diſtribution of parts may be *a juſt diſtribution?* Arrangement, moreover, is nothing but the action or ſituation by which order is placed or introduced any where: it is therefore neceſſary to know what *order* is, in order to underſtand fully what arrangement is. Again, the juſt

juſt diſtribution or diſpoſition of things is nothing but their arrangement: we ſhould therefore be acquainted with the arrangement of things, in order to know their juſt diſpoſition. I think I ſhall convey a more juſt idea of order by ſaying, that it is *the diſpoſition made in the different parts of a whole, that is proper for attaining the end an intelligent being has in view.*

284. Order ſuppoſes an intelligent being.

It is obvious then, that order ſuppoſes an intelligent capacity; for, by taking away the idea of intelligence, you take away the idea of *deſign* or *end:* and, in fact, with reſpect to things merely material, which we ſhould ſuppoſe to have no relation to any intelligence, turn them upſide down, inſide or outſide, when no end is propoſed in thoſe different ſituations, one arrangement is as well as the other, and all are equally in their places, all being equally without deſtination; as material things are by their nature incapable of having any from themſelves.

285. Various things adapted to the same end denote order.

But when I ſee a great number of beings, or different parties, who I know might have exiſted independent of each other, and who are actually diſpoſed together in a manner calculated to attain a uſeful or pleaſing end, that an intelligent capacity either had, or might have had in view, I there plainly diſcover order, and I know no rational perſon but what muſt diſcover

PART II.

it as well as I. Such then is preciſely the nature of order.

286. Example in an oration or picture.

In like manner, when I deſign to perſuade a body of men, or to make any impreſſion on them by an oration or ſpeech of an hour long; if all the parts, the ſentences, or words of the oration be ranged in the moſt proper manner for perſuading, or making the impreſſion intended on thoſe who ſhall hear or read the oration, there is *order* in it; as it conſiſts of parts diſpoſed for the accompliſhment of an end or purpoſe.

In the remembrance of an action performed by a great number of perſons, and accompanied by a multiplicity of events, if a painter, who reſolves to repreſent it in a picture, in order to give me a diſtinct idea of the matter, arranges all the parts of the piece in ſuch a manner as that I may, upon ſimply viewing it, conceive a diſtinct idea of the action and circumſtances, it is then evident likewiſe, that there is order in the piece; or, to ſpeak in the ſtyle of a painter, there is *arrangement*.

Again, if an architect propoſes to raiſe an edifice, in which are to be found all the parts and arrangements neceſſary or uſeful for the reſidence of a prince and his attendants, there muſt be order in ſuch an edifice.

287. A printed book cannot be the effect of chance.

When I ſee a printed poem, ſuch as the Eneid of Virgil, which reſults from the juſt ſituation of above

above four or five hundred thouſand letters, ranged in ſuch a manner as to preſent to my mind the end which an intelligent being had in view; that is, to deſcribe the ſucceſſive adventures of a hero, in a ſenſible, ingenious, and pleaſing narrative, it is impoſſible for me not to conceive, by this order, that it muſt have been formed by a mind or intelligence; and whoever will tell me that the Eneid might have been formed or diſpoſed by *chance*, will ſay, in fact, that it was formed by ſomething unintelligible; and then he muſt ſpeak at random, without having any idea annexed to his words.

288. Order in ſucceſſive ſubjects is ſtill more conſpicuous.

Thus order, in a permanent ſubject, always denotes an intelligence and end; but it ſhews it in a manner incomparably more ſtriking in a ſucceſſive ſubject, ſuch as a watch or clock, which, for a ſeries of years, continues to mark regularly the diviſion of months and hours. To judge ſeriouſly that a clock might be formed by the defect of cauſes or ideas expreſſed in the word chance, is a thing as manifeſtly abſurd as it would be to judge that we do not think when we are actually thinking: and this is one of thoſe firſt ideas, or firſt truths, that can have none prior; for, if a man ſhould aſk to have it proved that ſome intelligence, and not chance alone, has formed and preſerves the regularity of a clock, all the proof that ſhould be given to him would be to remain

ſilent,

PART II.

ſilent; for what could be ſaid on ſuch an occaſion but that the man was out of his ſenſes?

289. The idea of order is important.

This firſt truth, though ſimple and eaſy, is however uſeful and proper for ſolving many difficulties in the moſt important ſubjects; and I know not whether I could not, with the help of it alone, immediately ſilence a man that ſhould attempt to defend the ſyſtem of Spinoſa, provided he rightly underſtood what he might advance.

CHAPTER XVII.

Of act and action.

290. The explanations of action are obſcure.

WHAT is *action?* It is, we are told, *the exerciſe of a power or faculty.* And what is *power* or *faculty?* It is, according to ſome, *the power of acting.* But how are we to underſtand what the *power of acting* is, when we are ſtill ignorant of what *acting* or *action* is? So that nothing is here ſaid, unleſs one word for another; one obſcure, and the ſtate of the queſtion, for another that is obſcure, and equally the ſtate of the queſtion.

It is the ſame with reſpect to all the other terms that are uſually employed on this ſubject.

If

If it be ſaid, that *to act* is to produce an effect, and to be the efficient cauſe of it, properly ſpeaking; I aſk firſt, what is *to produce*; ſecondly, what *effect* is; thirdly, what is *cauſe*; fourthly, what *efficient cauſe*, properly ſpeaking, is: for all theſe do not give me a more diſtinct and ſimple idea than *action*, and *to act*.

291. What it is to produce in material things.

It is true that, in material things and certain circumſtances, I can form a tolerably juſt idea of what it is to *produce* a thing, and be the *efficient* cauſe of it, by obſerving that it is *to communicate a part of their own ſubſtance to beings that are thought new*. Thus the earth produces graſs, which is nothing but the ſubſtance of the earth, with an increaſe or change of modification as to figure, colour, flexibility, &c. In like manner the ſun produces light, which, in the air or our bodies, is nothing more than a communication of ſome particles or rays of the ſun, modified by their diſtance, rarefaction, &c.

292. What are efficient cauſes in the ſame things.

In this ſenſe, I clearly comprehend what it is to *produce*, and be the efficient cauſe: and I ſhall as readily underſtand what effect is, if it be ſaid that it is a being whoſe ſubſtance has been drawn from that of another being, with new modifications or circumſtances; for, if no new modifications had taken place, no difference would remain between the ſubſtance communicated and the ſubſtance communicating.

PART II.

But, after having thus formed the moſt exact idea that can be deſired of what it is to produce an effect, and be the efficient cauſe of it on certain occaſions, ſtill we do not know what it is *to act* and to *produce* in general; for, as ſoon as a ſubſtance communicates a part of what it is to another ſubſtance, we perceive, and ſay, that it *acts*: but this does not prevent us from ſaying that a being acts on many other occaſions, though we do not perceive that a ſubſtance communicates any part of what it is.

293. A ſtone is ſaid to act without communicating any part of its ſubſtance.

Let a ſtone break from a rock, and in its fall ſtrike againſt another ſtone, which, being ſet in motion, begins to deſcend; we then ſay that the firſt ſtone acts upon the ſecond: but has it therefore communicated any part of its ſubſtance to the ſtone acted upon? On the contrary, it has perhaps loſt ſome in the colliſion. It may be ſaid, perhaps, that it is the motion of the firſt that has been communicated to the ſecond; and it is by that communication of motion the firſt ſtone is ſaid *to act*. But theſe are ſtill words which people fancy they underſtand, but which are not, in fact, ſufficiently underſtood: for, in fine, how is the motion of the firſt ſtone communicated to the ſecond, if no part of the ſubſtance of the ſtone be communicated? Is motion any thing elſe but a mere mode? and is a mode, in the opinion of all philoſophers really, phyſically, out

of

of our thoughts, any other thing beſides the ſubſtance itſelf of which it is a mode?

294. A mode is not communicated.

Every mode is naturally as incommunicable, without a communication of the ſubſtance, as the ſubſtance itſelf is incommunicable. To ſay therefore that the motion of a ſubſtance may be communicated, without the ſubſtance itſelf being communicated, would be to ſay nearly, that the roundneſs of a globe may be communicated to another ſubſtance; without any part of the ſubſtance of the globe being communicated. We ſee plainly that, upon receiving the ſhock from the firſt ſtone, the ſecond begins to acquire a motion it had not before, and the firſt to loſe a part of the motion it had: but, unleſs we take a pleaſure in perplexing ourſelves, we cannot thence conclude that the motion of the one paſſes into the ſubſtance of the other: as the mode is really nothing but the firſt ſubſtance, it would be ſaying that this ſubſtance becomes another ſubſtance without ceaſing to be what it is. It is therefore true, that one body acts upon another, without communicating any part of its ſubſtance to it. The action of the ſtone that ſets another in motion, is not then a communication of a part of its being, or eſſence, to another being.

295. The ſoul acts internally without communicating any part of its eſſence.

Again, when what I call in myſelf my mind, or my ſoul, from having no thought or deſire with regard to any particular object,

PART II.

conceives a thought or deſire relative to that object; it is then generally ſaid *to act*. The thought or deſire, however, that has occurred, being no more than a mode of my mind and ſoul, is not an eſſence or ſubſtance diſtinct from them; and in this reſpect, likewiſe, to act, is not to communicate a part of what one ſubſtance is to another ſubſtance.

296. It acts in the ſame manner externally.

We alſo make uſe of the term *to act*, when in conſequence of a thought or deſire, conceived internally in the mind, a motion is formed externally, and in the body: but, as I ſee, however, no part of the ſubſtance of my mind that can be imagined to have paſſed to my body, I cannot rationally ſay that any part of the ſubſtance of my mind is communicated to that of my body, on thoſe occaſions wherein my mind is ſaid *to act* upon my body; as my mind and body can have nothing ſubſtantial in common, according to the moſt preciſe idea that can be formed of both.

297. God acts without communicating any part of his ſubſtance.

In like manner, if we conſider that God, as the only being from all eternity, by his omnipotent will made other beings that are called *creatures*, or *the world*, we ſay thence alſo that God *acted*: but, in this action, no part of the ſubſtance of God becomes a part of the ſubſtance of his creatures. We ſee by theſe different examples, that the words *to act* form ideas entirely different; a matter well worthy of obſervation.

In

CHAP. XVI

298. Various ſenſes of the words *to act*.

In the firſt example, *to act* ſignifies only what paſſes when a body in motion meets with a ſecond body which is then ſet in motion, or acquires a greater degree of motion; while the firſt loſes entirely, or leſſens its motion.

In the ſecond example, *to act* denotes what paſſes in me and in each man, when the ſoul takes one of the two modifications of which I know by experience that it is ſuſceptible, and which are called *thought* or *will*.

In the third example, *to act* means what happens when, in conſequence of a thought or deſire formed in me, a corporeal motion is produced in my body.

In the fourth example, *to act* ſignifies what happens when, in conſequence of the will of God, ſomething is formed diſtinct from him.

I ſay then, that, in theſe four examples, the words *to* ACT expreſs four things and four ideas ſo different, that they have no relation to each other, but what is very vague and indeterminate: it is, that, in conſequence of the being we ſay *acts*, ſome change happens; and this very change is what we call *action*: but it is in all theſe different ſorts of changes, or actions, that I ſay there is no affinity or relation; for in the firſt, that is, in the *ſtone*, by which another is likewiſe moved, the change is made inwardly, and outwardly in a corporeal being that is ſaid to act. In the ſe-

PART II. cond example, or in the ſoul that begins to conceive a thought or deſire, the change is produced entirely within a ſpiritual being. In the third example of the ſoul moving the body, the change is effected both within a ſpiritual being, and of conſequence externally in a corporeal being. In the fourth example, with reſpect to God, who acts externally, the change is entirely diſtinct from, and out of, him who acts, and by no means within.

Philoſophers certainly, and in particular metaphyſical writers, have been very remiſs in this point. We hear them ſpeak and diſpute of nothing but *acting* and *action*; but in no one of them, not excepting Mr. Locke himſelf, who endeavoured to penetrate into the inmoſt receſſes of the human mind, can we diſcover that they have any where thought of explaining the nature of *action*.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The queſtion as to accidental cauſes explained, in order to know whether creatures act, or God alone.

299. Men diſpute whether creatures act, without knowing what it is TO ACT.

IT has been long diſputed whether creatures act or not; whether they be merely *accidental cauſes*, or *real agents*. Numberleſs volumes have been written on this ſubject, and men of the greateſt abilities have taken an active and warm part in the debate. People were for a long while attentive to thoſe wrangles, and grew weary of them at laſt, becauſe they could not comprehend them: but, did the diſputants themſelves ever clearly underſtand each other? And, in order to accompliſh that neceſſary purpoſe, ought they not to have obſerved to one another, *We are diſputing whether creatures act, or God alone acts upon them; but have we ever agreed with reſpect to what* ACTION, *and* TO ACT, *in themſelves are? Is this point fully ſettled between us? By the ſame word we all uſe, do we preciſely mean the ſame thing?* If I am not much deceived, they would have found that they were not agreed in thoſe particulars.

For, in ſhort, the words *to act* and *action* being manifeſtly equivocal, and forming ideas entirely

PART II. different with reſpect to God and his creatures, we ſhould be told the preciſe and general idea affixed to thoſe words, to enable us to examine whether they may be applied both to the creature and God, and that we may know whether creatures act or not, whilſt we all agree that God acts.

300. Different ideas of the word, according to the various occaſions adduced.

With reſpect to inanimate creatures, the idea we have of *action*, being nothing but the idea of what paſſes when one body is put in motion by the meeting of another, it is evidently abſurd to to aſk whether the idea of *action* be applicable to God and the creature; for, in ſhort, God is not a body in motion, by the meeting of which another is moved.

301. What TO ACT is, in God.

In God the idea of action is the idea of what happens, when by his will alone ſomething is made or done diſtinct from him; and, if we take the idea of action in this ſenſe, there can be no reaſon in aſking whether an inanimate creature acts, as it is incapable of willing or deſiring. Add to this, that, as what we call *acting* or *action* in inanimate creatures is nothing, in fact, but motion, they have not, in themſelves, the principle or power of action, as they have not the principle of motion; for, being in themſelves indifferent as to motion or reſt, they have no principle to incline them more to motion than to reſt. And indeed no body

is

is ever put in motion of itſelf, but by another body; and the latter again by another, and ſo on until we come to a ſpiritual mover.

302. To act, in bodies, includes no idea of will.

As what is called *action*, or *to act*, in bodies, includes no idea of *will*, we ſee no relation between the idea of *action* with reſpect to God, and the idea of *action* in regard to bodies; ſo that we cannot, in that ſenſe, aſk whether action be a property equally applicable to God, and to bodies.

303. How action may be applicable to God, and to our ſouls, according to the ideas already explained.

Let us ſee if it be more rational to aſk, whether *to act*, or *action*, according to its preciſe idea, be a thing equally applicable to God, and to ſpiritual creatures, ſuch as the ſouls of men. In order to diſcuſs this matter with preciſion, let us conſider the ſoul of man, as far as it may be ſaid *to act*, either internally by thought or will, or externally by the motion produced in certain bodies by the will or thought.

304. No change takes place in God when he acts.

In the firſt reſpect, as what paſſes within me, when a thought or operation of the will takes place, is called *to act*, it is manifeſt, in this ſenſe, that my ſoul *acts*, and that God does not act: for a thought or operation of the will is produced in my ſoul, which is to my ſoul a new modification in its nature or eſſence; whereas, God being perfectly the ſame from all eternity, he is incapable of any new modification.

True,

PART II.

305. Whether, in the action of the ſoul, the ſoul itſelf, or God, be the principle of action.

True, it will be perhaps ſaid, our ſouls neither think, nor exerciſe their will, but by the thoughts and ſuggeſtions of the will that take place in them, and which are their modifications: but it may be aſked, whether it be God or the ſoul that is the principle of thoſe modifications, and produces them? In order to anſwer this queſtion, we ſhould remember that we have not yet naturally any idea of the words *to act*, with reſpect to God, unleſs it be the idea of what paſſes when, in conformity to his will, ſomething that did not exiſt before is produced diſtinct from him. In this ſenſe, thoſe who pretend that God alone acts in each thought which takes place in our ſouls, of courſe pretend likewiſe that every one of the thoughts and operations of the will takes place and exiſts in our ſouls, ſolely becauſe God will have it ſo, and by a poſitive determination of his will.

306. In what manner the ſoul acts, becauſe God will have it ſo.

But this idea itſelf, *becauſe God will have it ſo*, admits of another equivocation. Theſe words, in fact, may ſignify two very different things: the one is, that God, in general, will have the ſoul of man, from the nature he has beſtowed upon it, and in conſequence of what he has made it, to be ſuch, as to contribute of itſelf to its thought, and the operations of its will, which are its peculiar modifications.

Or

Or theſe terms, *becauſe God will have it ſo*, mean, that every thought or operation of the will, which ariſes in our ſouls, is produced in them ſolely by the particular and determinate will of God; ſo that our ſouls, at this rate, have as little ſhare in forming their own thoughts and deſires, as ſtones or blocks have in giving motion to themſelves.

307. The ſoul equally contributes to its thoughts, and the operations of its will.

I have ſpoken of *will* as of *thought*, as both are alike modifications of the ſoul. If the ſoul, in fact, can contribute nothing to the modification of its thought, how ſhould it contribute more to the modification of its will? Or, if it can contribute to the latter, why ſhould it not to the former likewiſe? To ſay therefore, that the ſoul has no more ſhare in forming its modification, which is *will* or *thought*, than matter has with reſpect to its modification or motion, is ſaying, that the ſoul has no more virtue or power than a lump of earth, or a log of wood.

308. We ſee no external principle of the act of the ſoul.

But, without taking notice of the horrid and deſtructive tendency of ſuch an opinion, as to religion and morality, I ſay, that, even in mere natural ſpeculation, it is manifeſtly irrational; for, when a body is put in motion, we ſee, and frequently before our eyes, that the principle of this motion is foreign to the body; and, with reſpect to the ſoul, we cannot diſcern any external principle of its thought and will: we indeed

PART II.

deed ſee the occaſion in objects that ſtrike our ſenſes; but it never can be ſuppoſed that a corporeal object is the principle of thought, and produces it.

309. The principle of action is in the ſoul.

This principle is then in the ſoul itſelf, as mankind have always believed; or in God only, as ſome new-fangled philoſophers have fancied: but this matter, if we conſider it properly, is one of thoſe firſt truths that can neither be proved nor combated by any truth anterior and more perſpicuous. To oppoſe it, in fact, by ſaying, that *a ſimple creature, ſuch as the ſoul, is incapable of modifying itſelf*, in order thence to conclude, *that it is not the ſoul that produces its own thought in itſelf*, would be merely to adduce the ſtate of the queſtion as a proof; for the point is, to prove *that a ſpiritual creature, ſuch as the ſoul, cannot, and ought not, to modify itſelf*; as the natural ſenſe of mankind, in all ages, ſupports the affirmative. If it be added, that motion is as eſſentially the modification of the body, as thought is the modification of the mind; and it be thence concluded, that, as the body cannot produce the modification peculiar to it, neither can the mind have a greater ſhare in forming its own; this again will be ſaying nothing to the purpoſe: for the queſtion is merely to know, whether it be not the eſſence or nature of a mind to modify

dify itſelf, in contradiſtinction to bodies, which are naturally incapable of any ſuch thing.

310. Thoſe who attack this truth adduce the ſtate of the queſtion as a proof.

In this queſtion, however, with reſpect to which mankind in general are of one opinion, what can a few ſpeculative philoſophers mean, when they pretend to aſſert the contrary, and attempt to ſubvert a ſentiment ſo univerſally eſtabliſhed, without adducing any other proof but the ſtate itſelf of the queſtion in more confuſed terms?

311. The notion of acting, a firſt truth.

This being the ſtate of the controverſy, the queſtion, as I have already ſaid, then falls on a firſt truth; and a firſt truth cannot be oppoſed but by frivolous arguments, as it cannot be combated by a propoſition anterior, or more clear; otherwiſe it would no longer remain a firſt truth.

Should any one pretend to attack it by another truth equally clear, and adduced likewiſe as a firſt truth; in that caſe, as of thoſe pretended contradictory firſt truths, one muſt neceſſarily be not a firſt truth, but a falſehood, I aſk how the controverſy is to be properly decided, unleſs by the opinion moſt generally eſtabliſhed, and moſt natural to mankind? If then I advance as a firſt truth, that *my ſoul produces motion in my body*; and Malbranche, on the other hand, propoſes as a firſt truth, *that a mind cannot act upon a body*; in this ſituation we prove nothing to each other: but I have on my ſide the

PART II.

the ſentiments ſuggeſted by Nature to the generality of mankind in all ages; and on his ſide he has a particular reflection; that is, *he does not ſee any relation between a mind and a body*, or that, *in the idea of his ſoul, he does not find the faculty or virtue of moving a body:* but, if he means to ground a proof on his reflection, nothing can be more erroneous than ſuch a mode of proceeding; for the only inference that can thence be drawn, is, that a thing is not, becauſe he does not ſee it, and can have no idea of it. This is no leſs abſurd than the concluſion of a man, born blind, who ſhould attempt to deny the exiſtence of colours, becauſe he does not ſee them, and cannot, by the utmoſt exertion of the mind, form any idea of the matter.

'312. We ſhould know the ſecret nature of the ſoul before we attempted to aſſert that it does not act.

To deny therefore, upon any good foundation, that the ſoul is capable of moving a body, we ſhould be fully convinced that we have a clear and perfect idea of the whole nature of the ſoul; and that we know its ſecret and real eſſence as well as it can poſſibly be known: but this is not the caſe, as all the world knows. If then, in general, it be a very erroneous mode of argument to conclude, that, as I do not ſee or cannot know a thing, therefore it does not exiſt; and I cannot ſee how my ſoul ſhould move my body, therefore it does not move it; the abſurdity of

ſuch

ſuch a conſequence is infinitely more ridiculous and extravagant, when the thing I cannot ſee is nevertheleſs confirmed by a ſentiment natural to all men, that irreſiſtibly inclines them to eſteem many things true, of which they can neither know the nature, nor the eſſence. We cannot diſcover either the manner or the nature of the union of the ſoul with the body. Shall we thence conclude, according to the method of arguing of Malbranche, that no ſuch union really exiſts? To what ſhocking abſurdities muſt ſuch arguments lead! How much more rational is it to conform to the experience of mankind, and admit the reality and exiſtence of many objects above our comprehenſion! A ſentiment univerſally diffuſed by Nature among mankind is a ſure guide: let us not abandon it therefore in order to embrace illuſions.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XIX.

Preciſe ideas calculated to explain what TO ACT; ACTION, CAUSE AND EFFECT, *are:*

AS the reſult of the preceding diſcuſſions on the nature of action—diſcuſſions perhaps the moſt important that are to be found in philoſophy, and the firſt principles of human knowledge—let us form a compendious abſtract of what may be rationally replied to the queſtion,

313. The idea of acting. What then is *acting*, or *to act?* I ſay, with reſpect to creatures, *to act* is, in general, *the diſpoſition of a being, from which by his intervention ſome change actually happens:* for it is impoſſible to conceive that there naturally happens any change, unleſs by ſome being that acts; and no created being acts, but a change muſt enſue, either in itſelf, or in ſome external object.

314. Bodies act as inſtruments. It will perhaps be ſaid, it muſt then follow, that the pen with which I am now writing ſhould be conſidered as acting, ſince, by means of the pen, a change is effected on the paper, which from being blank paper becomes a written paper: to this I reply, if ſuch a conſequence muſt follow, it will produce no inconvenience. This muſt be allowed

allowed by the whole body of philoſophers, as they give to my pen, on this occaſion, the name of *inſtrumental cauſe*; for, if it be *a cauſe*, it has an effect, and every thing that has an effect of courſe *acts*; as, to act, and to have an effect, is preciſely the ſame thing.

315. Unleſs they communicate a part of their ſubſtance.

I ſay further, my pen, on this occaſion, acts as truly and formally as any cauſe whatever, among beings purely corporeal, that do not communicate any part of their ſubſtance to their production. Indeed, if there be in the world any efficacious cauſe of this kind, it is a ſubterraneous fire that produces an earthquake; yet an earthquake is nothing but the motion of the particles of the earth excited by the motion of the particles of fire: in like manner alſo, the lines actually formed on this paper are only the ink moved in a particular manner by my pen, which is itſelf moved by my hand. There is no difference therefore between the ink moved on this paper and the earthquake, but that in the latter the immediate cauſe of the motion of the earth is more imperceptible or ſubtle, and in the former leſs ſo; but, at bottom, the fire does not more truely act on the particles of the earth than my pen on this paper. If it be ſaid, that my pen is itſelf moved by my hand, I ſay that the particles of fire are themſelves alſo moved or agitated by the air, and the air by ſome other body

PART II.

that is not the leſs real for being imperceptible to our ſenſes; as nothing is effected, with regard to things merely corporeal, but mechanically.

316. They are thought to act when we cannot diſcern what moves them.

I acknowledge, that when the immediate cauſe of a corporeal motion eludes our ſenſes, we ſay more particularly that the body *acts* in which the motion happens; and we are apt to imagine that bodies, in which a motion is effected without any perceptible cauſe, have the principle of their motion in themſelves: but, if we ſuppoſe them mere bodies—for I mean not to allude to the ſouls of animals, to the nature of which we are perfect ſtrangers—I ſay, if we ſuppoſe them ſuch, it is obvious to human reaſon, and all ſound philoſophy, that a body is never put in motion but by an external agent. According to this, the definition we have given of *acting* will agree very well with all that is ſaid *to act* with reſpect to bodies.

317. The idea of acting is applicable to the ſoul.

It will agree ſtill better with what is ſaid *to act* with regard to minds, either within themſelves by their thought and will, or extraneouſly by the motion they impreſs on any body; for each of theſe things is a change that happens through the interference of the ſoul.

The definition may be equally applied to the action of God, and to God himſelf, according to what we conceive of him: we conceive that he acts when he produces or creates any thing; for

for then there is a change effected by a being who exiſts of himſelf. But, before God produced any thing different from himſelf, did he not act, and could he have been from all eternity to that time without action? This queſtion is incomprehenſible, as, before we can give an anſwer to it, we muſt penetrate into the very eſſence of God, which is itſelf impenetrable. The learned will in vain tell us, with regard to this matter, that God from all eternity *acts by a ſimple, immanent, and permanent act*: theſe words are indeed lofty, and even reſpectable; but they convey no clear idea to our minds.

For my own part, who, as St. Paul expreſsly ſays, know not the Creator naturally but by his creatures, I can have no idea of him naturally, but as they ſuggeſt it; and they ſuggeſt none as to what God in himſelf is, without any reference to them. I ſee very well that an intelligent being, ſuch as the Author of the Creation, muſt have thought from all eternity; and if we call *acting*, with reſpect to God, what is ſimply to *think* or *will*, without any new thought, modification, or change taking place in him, I have no objection: and, if religion be more ſatisfied with the term *acting*, I ſhall ſtill be more inviolably attached to it: but the queſtion, at bottom, can never be any thing more than nominal; for, with reſpect to creatures, I comprehend what it is to act; and

PART II.

it is the ſame we apply to God to expreſs of him what we do not comprehend.

Will it however be granted, that, with reſpect to creatures, I underſtand what it is *to act?* And ſhall I not be told, that I only comprehend what paſſes on thoſe occaſions that are called *acting*, but not the intrinſic nature and virtue of acting?

318. We do not comprehend what the principle of action is.

If it be meant thereby, that I do not comprehend what is the principle of acting in creatures, I readily acquieſce. I know there is in my ſoul a principle that puts my body in motion; and that I do not comprehend the ſource or ſpring of this principle; but, at the ſame time, I do not preſume to explain it. All true philoſophy would be reduced to a very narrow compaſs, if all philoſophers were, like me, to avoid ſpeaking of things that are evidently incomprehenſible. When they ſhall have fully inveſtigated and explained all matters that are within the reach of human capacity, they may then employ their thoughts on ingenious and even uſeleſs ſpeculations. We ſhall now, by way of concluding this chapter, explain ſome terms familiar to the ſubject we have been treating.

319. A recapitulation of ideas on this matter.

1ſt. *To act* then, as I have obſerved, is, in general, with reſpect to creatures, what paſſes in a being, by means of which any change happens.

2dly.

2dly. What happens by the change is called *effect*; ſo that *to act*, or *produce an effect*, is the ſame thing.

3dly. The being from whom the change may be ſaid to proceed, I call *cauſe*.

4thly. The change, conſidered at the moment it actually happens, is, with reſpect to the cauſe, termed *action*.

5thly. The *action*, as impreſſed on, or received by, any being, is called *paſſion*; and, as received in an intelligent being who produced it himſelf, is termed *act*: ſo that, with regard to ſpiritual beings, we generally ſay, that *act* is the name of the acting faculty, and *action* the exerciſe of this faculty.

6thly. The cauſe, conſidered at the ſame time, with reſpect to the action and act, I call *cauſality*: the cauſe, conſidered as being capable of this cauſality, I term *power* or *faculty*. Theſe are the cleareſt ideas I have been able to form of thoſe terms which are uſed by philoſophers to expreſs a certain preciſion that is ſometimes neceſſary to be obſerved. If others will explain them more accurately, I ſhall readily adopt their language.

CHAPTER XX.

WHAT IS NATURAL, *conſidered in oppoſition to* SUPERNATURAL *and* ARTIFICIAL.

320. Natural, taken in various ſenſes.

BESIDES the ideas the word *natural* diſpoſition may have in common with the word *nature*, and which we have explained elſewhere, (N°. 217.) it is taken likewiſe for the inclination that reſults in each particular man from conſtitution or temper. To analyſe any of theſe ideas, is not the object of our preſent views; we have only to conſider the *natural diſpoſition* or *nature* of created beings under two points of view. 1ſt. In as much as they exiſt and act conformably to the ordinary laws God has eſtabliſhed for them, and by which they have only a limited and determinate degree of virtue, faculty, or power: in that ſenſe, what we call *natural* is contrary to *ſupernatural* or *miraculous*. 2dly. As far as they exiſt or act within the boundaries of thoſe laws, and of their determinate virtue, but without the interference of any effort of human induſtry, or attention of our mind to employ or diſpoſe things, with reſpect to any particular end or deſign: and, in this ſenſe, what we term *natural*

tural is contrary to what we call *artificial*, which is nothing but human induſtry.

321. It appears difficult to mark the bounds of natural and ſupernatural.

It appears difficult ſometimes to diſtinguiſh how far what is natural is oppoſed to ſupernatural; for, in ſhort, in the latter ſenſe, what is natural ſuppoſes general and ordinary laws: but what are thoſe general and ordinary laws? Are we capable of aſcertaining them exactly? We perceive and ſufficiently diſtinguiſh an effect that is not ſupernatural or miraculous; but we do not ſo juſtly diſcern what is ſo. What we ſee regularly, or at leaſt frequently happen, is common, and conſequently natural: but is every extraordinary thing that happens in the world miraculous? This we cannot pretend to affirm. And indeed a very uncommon event, that ſhould only happen once in a hundred thouſand years, might nevertheleſs proceed from a common principle, which, in a ſeries of revolutions and changes, might have formed a kind of prodigy, without quitting the regular courſe and limits of its ſphere. Thus we ſometimes ſee monſters of the moſt unaccountable and ſtrange nature; and yet we look upon them neither as miraculous, nor ſupernatural. It may be therefore aſked, how we can aſſert that events, conſidered as ſupernatural and miraculous, are ſo in reality, and not merely the effect of one of thoſe revolutions that happen in the courſe of a long ſeries of events; or, in

PART II.

what manner we are to know how far extends the virtue or efficacy of this common principle, which, by a long ſucceſſion of time, and particular combinations, may produce the moſt extraordinary things.

322. There are circumſtances by which we diſtinguiſh one from the other.

I again confeſs, that it is not always ſo eaſy a taſk as people imagine, to diſtinguiſh natural from ſupernatural things: our ignorance may ſometimes deceive us in theſe matters; ſo that, with reſpect to many events, which appear miracles to the common people, a wiſe man ſhould prudently ſuſpend his judgement. But we muſt likewiſe allow, that there are events of ſuch a nature, which no rational mind can believe to be the effects of that common principle of things we ſtyle the order of Nature: ſuch is, for example, the reſtoring a man from death to life.

It is in vain to object, that we are ignorant how far the powers of Nature extend; and that ſhe has, perhaps, reſources to work the moſt wonderful effects, from ſecret cauſes unknown to us. This may be advanced by men of extravagant fancies: the love of contradiction, or any other motive, may ſuggeſt theſe thoughts to ſome; but theſe things can make no impreſſion upon men of ſenſe, who reflect ſeriouſly on the matter, and are reſolved to deceive neither themſelves nor others. This impreſſion of common truth, that is evidently found in the breaſts of

the

the far greater part of mankind, and which we have elſewhere denominated *a common ſentiment*, or *common ſenſe*, is the unerring rule for diſtinguiſhing ſupernatural from natural; and this knowledge ſhould be ranked among the number of firſt truths that require no proof: nay, it is the rule itſelf which the Author of Nature has imprinted on the minds of all men; and he would have contradicted himſelf, if he had formed them to judge true what is falſe, and miraculous what is natural.

323. Artificial things are natural, and not natural.

Natural is oppoſed to artificial, as well as to miraculous; but not in the ſame reſpect, and after the ſame manner. What is ſupernatural and miraculous can never be ſaid to be natural; but what is artificial may be termed natural, and is really ſo when it is not conſidered as miraculous.

324. Definition of artificial.

Artificial is then nothing but what proceeds from the ordinary principle of things, but to which accedes the care and induſtry of the human mind, for the accompliſhment of ſome particular purpoſe deſigned by man.

The practice of raiſing by pipes and pumps immenſe bodies of water is a thing natural, as there is nothing ſupernatural in it: it is however called *artificial*, and not *natural*; becauſe it has been introduced into the world only by the care

PART II.

care and induſtry of men, in order to effect a purpoſe that Nature had denied before the exerciſe and application of the human mind.

325. Moſt things in uſe are in ſome degree artificial.

In this ſenſe there is ſcarcely any thing in uſe that is totally natural, but what has not been at the diſpoſal of man. A tree, for example a plum-tree or cherry-tree, is natural while it grows ſpontaneouſly in the foreſt, without planting or grafting: but when it has either been planted or grafted, in that reſpect it loſes as much of its natural quality as it has received impreſſions by the care of men. Do not plums and cherries then grow naturally on a grafted tree? Yes, ſo far, that they do not grow ſupernaturally; but not ſo when conſidered as being produced by the aſſiſtance of human induſtry; for in this reſpect the plums and cherries grow artificially. But if, after a tree has been once ingrafted, no farther care be taken of it, are not the plums and cherries then produced naturally? Yes, with regard to their growing and ripening, as human induſtry has no ſhare in contributing to either; but with reſpect to thoſe peculiar qualities of the plums and cherries, and their having ſuch a flavour and ſweetneſs, as they could not have poſſeſſed without the help of human induſtry, the plums and cherries are produced artificially, and not naturally.

326. As all wine is artificial, how can any be ſaid to be natural?

It is aſked in what ſenſe, we may, ſpeaking of a particular wine, ſay that it is *natural*, as all wine is in itſelf artificial; for, without the induſtry and care of men, there is no wine: ſo that, in this reſpect, wine is as truly artificial as brandy or ſpirits of wine; and they differ only in the greater or leſs degre of human induſtry, that is, in being more or leſs *artificial*. When wine is called *natural*, we give it that term to denote that it is in the ſtate of ordinary wine, without any other preparation than is uſual with reſpect to all wines in thoſe ſeaſons and countries when and where they are produced.

327. The natural mind, or diſpoſition.

According to the foregoing ideas, it is eaſy to perceive in what ſenſe the quality of *natural* or *unnatural* is applicable to various ſorts of minds. A mind is conſidered and ſaid to be natural, when the diſpoſition it has, neither proceeds from the care of other men, by inſtruction and education, nor is acquired by its own particular reflections.

328. AFFECTED or CULTIVATED, oppoſed to NATURAL.

To the word *natural*, taken in the latter ſenſe, are oppoſed the terms *cultivated* or *affected*: the former is a merit, the latter a reproach: the one expreſſes what is added to the natural mind by induſtry and judicious application or art; the other, what it ſometimes acquires by vanity and wrong habits.

The ſame may be obſerved, in proportion, of the talents of the mind. A man is ſaid to have natural

PART II.

tural eloquence or logic, when, without the knowledge that is acquired by the induſtry and reflections of other men or his own, he argues rationally, which is the ultimate and principal deſign of artificial Logic; or if he conveys to the minds of others a ſtrong and lively impreſſion of his ideas and ſentiments whenever he likes, which is the end of artificial eloquence, commonly called Rhetoric. What has been now ſaid of the firſt ideas of natural, ſupernatural, and artificial, may be ſo readily applied to all kinds of ſubjects, that it is not neceſſary to dwell longer on the matter, in order to deduce the firſt truths on a ſubject which, on the one hand, is very common, and in which however men are frequently apt to be miſtaken.

CHAPTER XXI.

Of ſubſtance and accident.

329. Ideas that are naturally formed from ſubſtance and accidents.

I SHALL now examine what ideas may be naturally formed with reſpect to the terms *ſubſtance* and *accident*. After weighing the matter in my mind, I have not been able to conceive any thing by *ſubſtance* but what correſponds with the idea of *being*, which I diveſt of the idea of every

every modification or mode of being, in order to conſider it only as far as it may be ſuſceptible of thoſe modifications or modes of being. Subſtance, therefore, conſidered preciſely as *ſubſtance*, is nothing but an abſtracted idea; for there exiſts naturally and really no *ſubſtance* that is but *ſubſtance* without being united with its modifications, which, according to the ideas we can naturally form, are nothing but the ſubſtance conſidered in various reſpects. They are ſometimes called *qualities*; at other times, *modes* or *modifications*; on other occaſions, *attributes* or *adjuncts*, *circumſtances*, or *accidents*, of the object: and on theſe are grounded different queſtions.

370. Whether the ſubſtance can ſubſiſt without its modification.

It is aſked firſt, Whether a ſubſtance and its modification can mutually exiſt diſtinct from each other? All that is neceſſary here, I think, is to explain the terms; and then no difficulty will remain.

If the modification does not immediately form a part of the nature of the thing or ſubſtance, and be no way eſſential to it, the ſubſtance may remain without its modification. Thus a bowl actually modified by motion, may exiſt, and often does exiſt, without motion; becauſe the bowl is eſſentially a *bowl*, and conſidered as ſuch, independently of motion; and this may be called *accident*, or *accidental modification*.

If,

PART II.

331. It cannot, if the modification forms part of its eſſence.

If, on the contrary, the modification I have in my mind forms a part of what is, and of what I ſuppoſe, eſſential to the object, the object cannot exiſt ſeparate from its modification: thus fire cannot be without the modification of motion; becauſe, according to the idea we have of things in their natural ſtate, fire eſſentially conſiſts only of particles of matter in motion; and this modification may be called eſſential. But cannot fire exiſt miraculouſly, at leaſt without motion? I confeſs my ignorance in this matter. But, ſuppoſing ſuch a thing poſſible, it is no longer the fire I am thinking or ſpeaking of; for I am ſpeaking of a natural fire, and whoever aſks the queſtion, ſpeaks of a ſupernatural fire, to which I mean not to allude, as I have naturally no idea of ſuch a thing.

We muſt alſo remember that we often ſuppoſe eſſences to be things (No. 202.) different from what they really are; as we neither know them intimately, nor in all reſpects what they are exactly in themſelves; but only by that which ſtrikes our ſenſes. Our readers are referred to what has been already obſerved with regard to eſſence. (No. 197, &c.)

In order then to determine whether a thing may or may not be without its modification, let us firſt be agreed as to the idea we have of the eſſence of the thing; and if the modification in queſtion

queſtion forms no part of that eſſence, the thing may be without its modification. CHAP. XXI.

332. What is eſſential or accidental in fiſhes.

Thus, in order to know whether it be a ſimple modification in fiſhes to have blood without heat, we muſt previouſly ſettle what conſtitutes the eſſence of fiſhes. It had been long made to conſiſt in their having blood without heat; it has been ſince alledged that the blood of ſome fiſhes is warm. The Academy of Sciences at Paris has determined, that it is the peculiar nature of fiſhes to have a blood or ſubſtance that forms an oil inſtead of greaſe: in the latter caſe, it will be no more than accidental in the ſubſtance of fiſhes to have blood without heat.

If the modified ſubſtance, however, can exiſt without its modification, the modification cannot naturally exiſt independent of the ſubſtance: I ſay naturally, and according to the ideas ſolely ſuggeſted by mere human reaſon, within the bounds of which we confine ourſelves in this treatiſe; for, in ſhort, according to our mere natural ideas, the modification of the ſubſtance is nothing but the ſubſtance itſelf modified; and therefore to aſk whether the modification can exiſt without the ſubſtance, is to aſk whether ſubſtance can be without ſubſtance.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXII.

Anſwers to ſome difficulties with reſpect to ſubſtance and ſubſiſtence.

333. The modification of one being does not become that of another.

THE accident of a thing, according to ſome perſons, is no more than the accidental modification. Now this modification may exiſt without the thing that is modified by it: the whiteneſs of a lily, for example, may be found without the lily itſelf, of which it is the whiteneſs, ſince it is to be ſeen in another lily.

I anſwer, as has been hinted elſewhere, that the whiteneſs of the ſecond lily is not the whiteneſs of the firſt (N°. 300.); as the former, in the natural ſtate, is nothing but the firſt lily that is white, and the latter no more than the ſecond lily that is white, without their having really any thing in common together but a perfect reſemblance of colour; the whiteneſs of the firſt lily, which is the accidental modification, being, in a natural ſtate, nothing but the ſubſtance itſelf, that has nothing of the ſubſtance of the ſecond lily.

334. Difference of ſubſtance and ſubſiſtence according to faith.

Religion teaches us, *that there is in God one only ſubſtance or nature, and three perſons*; whereas, in

Jeſus

Jeſus Chriſt, man and God, there is but one perſon, and two ſubſtances, or *natures*. Theſe are truths of which we cannot rationally doubt, under the pretence of not comprehending them: it has been already ſhown on different occaſions, that there are things true, which we cannot have any idea of naturally; but as, for reaſons that have been aſſigned, I look for nothing in this Treatiſe but the firſt notions ſuggeſted by the pure light of Nature, and as that alone cannot ſupply the idea of the difference found between ſubſtance and perſon, I leave it to Divines to explain the matter: it is ſufficient to obſerve here, as hath been repeatedly ſaid, that this difference is nevertheleſs real; and it is reaſonable to believe it, on the word of God declared by the voice of Religion. CHAP. XXII.

It may be aſked perhaps, on this occaſion, whether I can have an idea, and ſpeak rationally, of an object that is beyond the reach of my capacity. I anſwer in the affirmative: I may ſpeak of it as of an idea that is not diſtinct, preciſe, and clear; for otherwiſe there would no longer be any faith: but I ſpeak of it as a general idea ſuggeſting to the mind ſomething that exiſts by divine omnipotence, and that is not the leſs really exiſtent for being incomprehenſible to me.

335. A man born blind can have an idea of colours.

A man born blind, who hears others ſpeak, and who ſpeaks himſelf, of colours of which he

PART II. has no idea by natural experience, believes their exiſtence however, as he is perſuaded that all thoſe who ſpeak to him on the ſubject are people of ſenſe and judgement, whoſe veracity he cannot doubt according to reaſon: he is therefore convinced that the word *colour* means ſomething that really exiſts, under which, as a man born blind, he has never had, nor ever can have, a clear and diſtinct idea. Thus, he who would ſpeak rationally of ſubſtance and ſubſiſtence, according to faith, might very well be compared to a man, born blind, who ſhould give a treatiſe on the ſenſes from his own particular experience: he would not include the ſenſe of ſeeing, of which he had no experience or idea; but he would not therefore deny its real exiſtence: on the contrary, he would undoubtedly believe it on the teſtimony of others; but he would wiſely refrain from giving any explanation on that article, that he might not incur the proverbial reproach, and be ſaid *to ſpeak like a blind man of colours.*

If a man born blind may and ought to believe the real exiſtence of colours, on human teſtimony alone, with how much better foundation, on divine authority, infallible in itſelf, may and ought we to believe the myſteries of religion, though we naturally have no knowledge of them! Such are the general arguments againſt liber-

tiniſm

tiniſm and infidelity, to which pretended free-thinkers will never be able to oppoſe any thing that is capable of making an impreſſion on rational minds. CHAP. XXIII.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Of ſimple and compound.

336. The relation ſimplicity has to unity.

THIS chapter might ſerve as an appendix to that of unity. If we, in fact, conſider any thing whatever as one, and as having no parts different or ſeparable from each other, we call it *ſimple*. In that ſenſe, it properly belongs only to intelligent beings to be ſimple, and particularly to the firſt being, that is, God; for, as we conceive nothing ſeparable in the ſubſtance of an intelligent being, neither have we any idea that it can be compoſed of parts. To ſuppoſe the leaſt thing ſeparable in the ſubſtance of an intelligent being, would be to ſuppoſe it, at the ſame time, capable of being deſtroyed entirely.

If we take the word *ſimple* in this preciſe meaning, we ſhall not find any thing ſimple in material beings, nor any thing that is perfectly *one*; for any body may always be ſo divided as that its ſubſtance ſhall ſtill ſubſiſt in the parts after

PART II.

their ſeparation; therefore one cannot be the other, nor is the body ſimple.

337. In what manner bodies are ſaid to be ſimple.

This term however is uſed, with reſpect to bodies, in a ſenſe analogous to that in which it is applied to minds; and a body is called *ſimple*, in the parts of which no ſenſible difference is commonly diſtinguiſhed. Thus we ſay water is a *ſimple* body: ſome perſons have ſaid the ſame of fire, gold, ſilver, and of what we comprehend under the name of elements and metals; becauſe, in taking only a ſuperficial view of theſe things, as we generally do in the common practice of life, we perceive no difference of parts in them: yet it is evident, that this difference does not leſs really exiſt, as may be ſeen in thoſe bodies that are analyſed by chymical operations. We there find no body but what has different parts, and conſequently no body that is abſolutely ſimple, and not compounded; unleſs it be perhaps what chymiſts denominate *caput mortuum*, which is a kind of earth they cannot reduce into ſpecific parts that appear different to us. This earth might therefore be called the moſt ſimple of bodies.

338. Compound is oppoſed to ſimple.

What is oppoſed to ſimple is called compound, and reſults from ſeveral parts, eſpecially when they are of different kinds: but this matter furniſhes no information upon any ſubject that merits to delay the Reader's attention.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXIV.

Of what is neceſſary, accidental, or free.

339. The idea of *neceſſary* is eaſily conceived.

THERE is ſcarcely any term more ſimple and clear, to expreſs the general idea men conceive by the word *neceſſary*, than the word itſelf.

If I ſay, what is neceſſary is of ſuch a nature that it is impoſſible it ſhould not be, it may be aſked, *What is the impoſſibility of not being?* To which I ſhall not be able to anſwer more readily than to the queſtion, *What is neceſſity?*

A more preciſe idea perhaps might be given of neceſſity by ſaying, *it is that which is of ſuch a nature, that no will can prevent it from being as it is:* and *accidental* is *what is not neceſſary.*

340. Neceſſity is oppoſed only to free-will.

It follows, that neceſſity, taken in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word, is oppoſed only to the free-will of an intelligent and ſpiritual being; for a material being cannot be oppoſed to another material being, unleſs with regard to the will of ſome intellectual being; and if, in a material being, any thing accidental be found, it is by the free-will of an intellectual being. This matter requires explanation.

PART II.

When we ſay it is neceſſary, and not accidental, that a ſtone deſcends and flames aſcend, that ice cools and fire warms; this neceſſity is not with reſpect to the will of God, who may, whenever he pleaſes, prevent ice from cooling, and fire from warming. In this ſenſe, *neceſſity*, ſtrictly ſpeaking, is not applicable but to the exiſtence and nature of God himſelf, which cannot be prevented by any will whatever.

341. No event is neceſſary, with reſpect to the will of God.

On the contrary, what is *contingent* or *accidental* has free-will for its more or leſs remote cauſe: when a plague happens, or any other contagious diſtemper, it immediately proceeds from a neceſſary cauſe, which is, the corruption of the air; and the neceſſary cauſe of the corruption of the air is a great number of dead bodies, or a quantity of blood vitiated by unwholeſome food: ſcarcity or famine is the neceſſary cauſe of unwholeſome food; the neceſſary cauſe of ſcarcity and famine is war, which interrupts commerce and agriculture: all theſe are neceſſary cauſes; but the cauſe of war is the free-will of princes, who begin and continue it at their pleaſure. If it had not free-will for its more or leſs immediate cauſe, it would have nothing *accidental* or *contingent*.

342. What is accidental has free-will for its cauſe.

In all natural events, we may, in like manner, aſcend from one neceſſary cauſe to another, until we reach the primary cauſe, that is, the free-will

343. Every thing is found neceſſary until we aſcend to free-will.

will of God, which has given to matter ſuch a determinate degree and courſe of motion, as ſhall, from one immediate cauſe to another, have neceſſarily produced the event, or effect, in queſtion; and, in a hundred thouſand worlds, it muſt always neceſſarily happen ſo, unleſs the order and gradation ſhould be interrupted by the intervention of ſome free-will.

344. Example taken from natural effects.

We may ſee an example of this in the overflowing of a river, the neceſſary and immediate cauſe of which is, the uncommon quantity of waters ſwelling beyond the capacity of its bed: this redundance is neceſſarily occaſioned by the melting of ſnow and ice: theſe are neceſſarily diſſolved by the return of the ſun in the vernal ſeaſon: the return of the ſun is effected by its regular courſe, which is nothing but the determinate motion given to the ſun, and the reſt of the machine of the world, by the free-will of its Firſt Author. This detail might be carried much further, in order to make it more plauſible; but what has been ſaid is ſufficient to ſhew that every thing which happens in the univerſe proceeds from neceſſary cauſes, neceſſarily determined by each other; and that none of thoſe cauſes can originally have any determination but by a free-will: ſo that every thing in the univerſe is neceſſary, and nothing is contingent, but the effect of a free-will.

PART II.

345. What chance is.

It may be aſked, on this occaſion, what is the nature of that we call *chance?* It is but an effect of the cauſe of which we are ignorant; but it is clear that there can be no effect without a neceſſary or free cauſe, or at leaſt partly neceſſary and partly free. It is this mixture which generally conſtitutes what is called *chance*, when we can neither diſcern the neceſſary cauſe, the free cauſe, nor the concurrence of both.

346. Example.

A gameſter throws three ſixes with three dice: his adverſary happens to throw two ſixes and a five, and attributes his ill ſucceſs to chance; yet it is the effect of his will that gives to his hand certain motions, which he does not conſider, and cannot form any judgement of; but, in conſequence of theſe motions, the weight of the dice, the nature and ſituation of the table, and other neceſſary cauſes, joined to free-will, that made him throw the dice, produced the caſt which is called the effect of chance. In the Third Part of this work we ſhall examine whether there are ſuch things as free cauſes or free-will, and what conſtitutes their freedom.

CHAPTER XXV.

Of the nature of what is termed poſitive, negative, and privation.

347. Whether finite and infinite are mutual negations of each other.

VARIOUS philoſophers have wearied their imagination in order to diſcover whether *finite* be a negation of *infinite*, or *infinite* a negation of *finite*. Some have aſſerted, that infinite being beyond every degree of finite, finite is therefore a negation of infinite, by which it is ſurpaſſed: others ſay, as finite is a determinate degree, what is not finite is a negation of whatever is determinate and finite. An idea of the terms will explain this matter.

348. A definition of poſitive.

By the word *poſitive* I mean any thing whatſoever that exiſts, or may exiſt, either in reality, or in thought. It will be proper here to explain a difficulty that naturally occurs with reſpect to this definition.

349. Whether we have any idea of negative.

If *poſitive* be what exiſts in reality, or in thought, *negative* is that which neither exiſts in reality, nor in thought. How is it then poſſible to have an idea of what has no exiſtence even in thought, as whatever is in thought is an idea? This would be, to have an idea of negative, and

not

PART II.

not to have it, at the ſame time: it would be having it, ſince it is ſuppoſed; and not having it, as it would not be even in thought.

350. In what manner we conceive non-entity, or nothing.

It will be however ſaid, that when we hear, in converſation, the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*, which are negative terms, we underſtand and conceive what is ſaid to us; and therefore we muſt have ſome idea at the time. This is true: we have an idea of words, that is, of the words *nothing* or *non-entity*, from which we ſeparate every idea of any being that might occur to our minds: and ſuch is the true nature of whatever is called *negative*, and *negation*. It is not, people ſometimes imagine, a real *nothing*, or *non-entity*; for *nothing* and *non-entity* can neither form any idea, nor be the object of one; for, were either to produce an idea, it would, from that very circumſtance, become then ſomething, and ceaſe to be nothing or non-entity: but what is called *negative*, or *negation*, is the ſeparation made by the mind of one idea from another, as of the idea of a thing from the idea of a word: now the ſeparation is not a true nothing, or non-entity; it is an operation of the mind, that diſunites, ſeparates, or divides two things or ideas which were, or might be, joined and united; and it is always the ſeparation of one poſitive from another.

When

When I ſay, therefore, that *a man is not a brute*, it is ſaying, *a man is a different creature from a brute*; and when I ſay, *folly is not wiſdom*, it is as if I ſaid, *folly is a different thing from wiſdom.* It is the ſame thing with regard to every negative and negation, and even the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*; as when we ſay, *nothing appears:* for it is only ſaying, that *the idea of the word* nothing, *or* non-entity, *is ſeparated from the idea of every thing that appears.*

351. The meaning of negative terms.

If the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*, were not to expreſs ſomething poſitive, it would form no idea, as every idea is ſomething poſitive: neither would it form any ſenſe, as if one were to ſay, that *nothing, or non-entity, preceded the exiſtence of creatures*; for, in order to precede it, it muſt be; and *nothing*, or *non-entity*, is not, nor ever has been. Thoſe who make uſe of the expreſſion, mean only to ſay, *that creatures began to exiſt, or the exiſtence of creatures began, at a time which I conceive within myſelf as preceded by the ſole eternity of God:* but, in whatever light the propoſition and expreſſion are conſidered, they muſt always form ſomething poſitive; and all the negative I ſhall be able to conceive will ſtill be a poſitive, ſeparated by my thought from another poſitive. This may be applied to every thing that occurs to the imagination, accompanied by the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*; as when

we

PART II.

we ſay, *nothing is worthy of God but God himſelf*; that is, *every thing that is different from God is ſeparated from whatever is worthy of God*; or, in more conciſe terms, *the only thing worthy of God is God himſelf.*

352. An explanation of them is uſeful.

It will perhaps be found, that the explanation given here is not more clear than the thing explained: but this is not to be wondered at; for, as we are accuſtomed to uſe the word *nothing*, or *non-entity*, in order to expreſs that kind of ſeparation called *negation*, we more readily underſtand familiar terms than ſuch as are extraordinary and unuſual: but this explanation is not therefore leſs uſeful to our deſign; as the buſineſs is, to ſhew how mere nothing can never form any idea; and that, if thoſe words *nothing* and *non entity*, ſo frequently employed in common converſation, be not reduced to ſome primitive idea, they produce no ſenſe, but unmeaning ſounds, by which the mind is ſometimes perplexed to little purpoſe.

353. Finite and infinite are negatives of each other.

This explains how we are to ſolve the difficulty propoſed at the beginning of this chapter: we may thence know whether *finite* be a negation of *infinite*, or *infinite* the negation of *finite*; for, according to what has been advanced, the inutility of this queſtion, and a thouſand others of a ſimilar kind, appears in the moſt glaring light. As a negation is no more than a ſepara-

tion,

tion, *infinite* and *finite* are equally negations of each other; and we might therefore very juſtly define *infinite*, as *a different thing from limited and finite*, but in which the mind is loſt; and *finite*, as *ſomething limited*, and not infinite. Without a manifeſt error, however, we cannot imagine what is limited not to be ſomething poſitive in itſelf; as it is either a certain degree or quantity, ſingle or repeated ſo many times, or a certain proportion with a certain quantity or degree: thus whatever idea we may form of any length of time ſhort of eternity, it muſt be always finite, becauſe it muſt be either ſo many minutes, days, years, or ages. It is the ſame with every other quantity ſeparated or ſucceſſive: if it be limited, it is always a certain meaſure or ſpace, or a certain repetition of a particular meaſure, &c. which is ſtrictly poſitive; and infinite is therefore as much the negation of finite, as the latter is of the former. This ſhould be applied to every other negation, as it never is any thing but the ſeparation of two objects, or two ideas. CHAP. XXV.

In order to ſay a word or two of *privation* at preſent, we muſt obſerve, that it is a real negation, with this only difference, that a negation ſeparates one thing or idea from another thing or idea, without regard to the nature of the objects ſo ſeparated; whereas *privation* ſeparates an idea or thing, ſhewing that the things or ideas ſe- 354. What *privation* is.

PART II.

ſeparated might or ought to be united together. Thus, let whiteneſs be ſeparated from a coal, or jet, it is a ſimple negation; but if whiteneſs be ſeparated from a ſtone; or alabaſter, it is a privation, becauſe we ſuppoſe that whiteneſs might be found in a ſtone, and muſt be in alabaſter.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Of a whole and its parts.

355. Whole and parts are relative terms.

NOTHING is wanting here but an explanation of words, and ſuch as are commonly ſuppoſed to be an explanation of each other. *A whole*, it is ſaid, *is a collection of parts*; and, if we enquire what *parts* are, we are told, *they are what form, or contribute to form, a whole.* But do ſuch words explain or illuſtrate any thing? No truely: and the reaſon is, becauſe the idea of *whole* is more clear than any thing elſe that can be ſaid of it. When we ſay therefore, that *the whole is greater than any of its parts*, provided we comprehend the meaning of the two words *whole* and *parts*, the matter is immediately obvious to our conception; for it is the moſt ſimple uſe we can make of judgement, and is no more than ſay-

ſaying, *that ſuch a thing is that thing, and no other.* We call *whole*, in any object, what is the greateſt quantity in it; and we call *part*, what is leſs: to ſay therefore, that *the whole is greater than a part*, is ſaying nothing more than that *what is the greateſt quantity in any object is greater than what is leſs*; or ſimply, that *what is the greateſt is the greateſt*: in like manner, when it is ſaid, that *all the parts collectively taken are equal to the whole*, it is ſaying, that *ſuch a thing is ſuch a thing*; for the parts being all united, or taken collectively, are preciſely what is called *the whole*; and the whole is nothing but the parts taken collectively, or a *collection of parts.*

356. The whole is often arbitrary.

It may be here obſerved, that every object may be, or not be, *a whole*, or *a part*, according to our fancy; for, by conſidering it in its fulleſt extent, it is *a whole*; and by viewing it on the ſide that does not conſtitute its greateſt extent, it is called *a part.* Beſides, what is greateſt in an object is often found, with reſpect to another object, comparatively leſs: the ſame thing therefore, in different points of view, is often found to be *a whole*, and *a part*: England is a whole with reſpect to York, and is ſomething more than the latter; but with regard to Europe, it is no more than a part, becauſe it is included in, and ſomewhat leſs than, Europe. Theſe matters are ſo clear and obvious to the mind, that in ex-

PART II. explaining them we can ſcarcely find any expreſſions equally perſpicuous with the ideas they convey. This has given occaſion to certain philoſophers to ſuppoſe thoſe things incomprehenſible, becauſe they could not be explained: whereas they ſhould have ſaid, they were inexplicable becauſe they could be comprehended more clearly than any explanation that might be given of them.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Of duration and time.

357. To be permanent, is to exiſt without being deſtroyed.

WHAT is duration, or to be permanent? It is *to exiſt free from deſtruction.* This is the moſt exact definition that can be given of duration; but the ſimple word *duration* explains the matter as clearly as that explanation. Whoever would attempt to explain the word *exiſt*, muſt find himſelf equally embarraſſed; and it would be no leſs difficult to explain how thoſe ideas firſt came to be formed in our minds; for we poſſeſs them more intimately than we can expreſs.

358. The explanation of Mr. Locke is uſeleſs and obſcure.

When Mr. Locke, therefore, and Mr. Le Clerc his follower or abbreviator, endeavoured to explain

plain how the idea of duration is formed in us by the ſucceſſion of our thoughts that preſent themſelves to the mind one after another, they may have made ingenious remarks; but they have ſaid nothing to explain the nature or origin of the idea we have of duration: for, though no ſucceſſion of thoughts were to take place in our minds, and that we had no more than a ſingle thought, we ſhould nevertheleſs have the idea of duration, eſpecially if it ſhould be an afflictive thought. I do not therefore conceive what Mr. Locke means by ſaying, that *the idea of duration is ſuggeſted to us by conſtant changes of ſucceſſion, whoſe parts are continually periſhing.* In God, for example, in whom there is no ſucceſſion, is not his being continually permanent? and is he not ſenſible of its permanency or duration?

I ſhould imagine therefore, without entering into a deeper ſcrutiny, that the idea of duration in general is no other, as hath been already ſaid, but what we have of a being or action, while we conceive that being, or action, to be neither diſcontinued nor deſtroyed.

359. The meaſure of duration is time.

Beſides the idea of duration, we have likewiſe the idea of a meaſure or degree of duration, that is not duration itſelf, though we often confound them together, as we are apt to do with regard

PART II.

to our ſentiments, and their effects, cauſes, or other circumſtances.

360. Time is the regular revolution of a body.

The meaſure of duration is only what we call *time*; and time is nothing but *the regular revolution of ſome ſenſible object*, as the annual courſe of the ſun, the monthly of the moon, or the diurnal of a hand on the dial-plate of a clock.

361. Parts of time called time alſo.

The attention we pay to this regular revolution is what preciſely forms in us the idea of time. The interval of this revolution, being divided into various ſhorter intervals, forms the idea of the parts of time, to which we alſo give the name of *time*, longer or ſhorter, according to the ſeveral intervals of the revolution.

362. Applications of the idea of time.

When we have once formed this idea of time, we apply it to every duration that we conceive or ſuppoſe equal to ſuch interval of regular revolution: and we thereby give to duration itſelf the name of time, applying the name of the meaſure to the thing meaſured, though the duration meaſured be not, in fact, the time by which it is meaſured, and to which it is applied. Thus, God had duration before time; that is, *he was, without ceaſing to be, previous to the creation of the world, and before the regular revolution of any body.*

363. Exaggerated difficulties with reſpect to the nature of time and duration.

I am ſurpriſed therefore that ſo many philoſophers have ſpoken of *time* and *duration* as of things inexplicable or incomprehenſible: *ſi non rogas,*

rogas, intelligo, ſay they; and, according to Mr. Locke's paraphraſe, *the more I endeavour to inveſtigate the nature of time, the leſs I comprehend it. Time, that unravels all things, is itſelf incomprehenſible.* All this myſtery however conſiſts of two words, that have been explained above. Thus a confuſion of ideas generally proceeds from language and expreſſions.

364. Metaphyſical reſearches with reſpect to ideas and names.

In all thoſe metaphyſical reſearches that appear ſo intricate, all that we have to do, as hath been already obſerved, is to conſider the moſt ſimple ideas we have in our minds, and the names affixed to them by cuſtom, in order to diſcover what we ſhould hold as firſt truths with regard to them.

365. The ideas of time and duration are as clear as any we can form.

By theſe two methods we immediately find the idea or notion of *duration* and *time:* when I ſay, I have an idea of a being as not ceaſing to be, this is what is called *duration:* I have an idea of this duration as being meaſured by the regular revolution of a body, or by the intervals of that revolution; and this is what I call *time.* Theſe notions appear to me as clear as it is poſſible for them to be; and whoever ſhould attempt to ſet them in a clearer light, would not act more wiſely than he who ſhould endeavour to explain in what manner two and two make four, and not five.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Of relation.

366. What is meant by relation, and its foundation.

IT is evident that we perceive various parts and circumſtances in the ſame object. When one of thoſe parts or circumſtances occaſions us to think of another, this is what is called *relation*; and this firſt object, ſo far as it gives us occaſion to compare it with another, is what I think is called, in the language of the ſchools, *the foundation of the relation.*

367. Its common definition.

Relation is generally defined by ſaying, that it is *the reference one thing bears to another*; in Latin, *reſpectus unius ad aliud:* but, as *relation* or reference are eſſentially or ſtrictly the ſame idea, that is to ſay, *relation is the relation of one thing to another*, it remains equally to be known, what *relation* or reference is, and in what it conſiſts: I think, as I have already obſerved, that it might be better defined as *the occaſion an object gives, in ſome particular, of thinking of another object.*

368. Le Clerc endeavours to explain relation better.

Mr. Le Clerc has endeavoured to explain the matter by ſaying, that *relation is an idea in an object, that includes the idea of another object*; which he expreſſes in Latin thus—*eas vocamus relationes*

lationes quibus fit ut conſideratio rei alicujus, aliûs conſiderationem includat: to which he adds, *that there are relations* AD INFINITUM; as there is no one thing but what may occaſion us to think of another, and that we unite at pleaſure all ſorts of ideas: but if every thing in the world be relative, and may occaſion us to think of another, why do we more particularly call ſome relative rather than others? or why does not each thing occaſion us to think of another? ſince, in preſenting to our minds the idea of itſelf, it ſhould alſo preſent us with the idea of another thing which it includes. This Mr. Le Clerc does not explain. What follows may ſerve to illuſtrate the matter. Every thing, or rather every idea of a thing, except the general idea of being, is compoſed of ſeveral particular ideas; ſo that the total idea of the thing includes both ſome diſtinctive and ſome common idea.

369. How this is to be underſtood.

If the total idea of man, for example, reſults from the particular ideas of *animal* and rational; the idea of animal is common to other beings beſides man; and the idea of rational is diſtinctive, or peculiar to man: thus the idea of animal, common both to a man and an elephant, gives me occaſion, if I chuſe to make uſe of it, of thinking of an elephant when I think of a man, as the former is an animal as well as the latter. Theſe are relations by which one object furniſhes

PART I.

us with an occaſion of thinking of another; ſo that we may, as we like, neglect or embrace the occaſion either of thinking or not thinking of another object: but they are not relations we neceſſarily perceive, and which naturally remind us of another object. If we conſider things as to their diſtinctive idea, it is by no means true that they are all relative; and yet it is the diſtinctive idea that properly conſtitutes the relation of things, as they are ſtrictly called relative only when their diſtinctive idea neceſſarily recalls the idea of another thing: thus the ideas of *father*, *maſter*, and *creator*, are in themſelves relative, including in their diſtinctive idea the idea of *child*, *ſcholar* or *diſciple*, and *creature*; as the diſtinctive idea of *father*, is to have children; the idea of *maſter*, to have ſome diſciples or ſcholars; of a *creator*, to have creatures.

370. Two kinds of RELATIONS or RELATIVES.

From theſe two kinds of ideas, the diſtinctive and common, we have alſo the clear and preciſe notion of two ſorts of relations; the one of reſemblance, and the other of eſſence.

371. Arbitrary relation.

Beſides the two kinds of relations above mentioned, a third ſort may be diſtinguiſhed, that we ſhall call arbitrary; which, by depending in ſome degree on the imagination, is, on that account, the more important, and more difficult to be explained: it conſiſts in the occaſion which an idea arbitrarily formed gives us of recollecting ano-

another idea, and of forming a judgement with respect to those ideas, that has no truth, but with regard to the arbitrary idea we have formed in our minds: such are the ideas of *greatness*, *goodness*, *excellence*, &c. If we should, for example, never have seen or heard of any hill or mountain of greater height than a quarter of a mile, as might happen to some of the inhabitants of the Low Countries, a mountain a mile high would appear a considerable one to such people; but this mountain would be looked upon as inconsiderable and trifling to the people of the Alps, who are accustomed to see mountains of much greater height. This example is so striking, that there is no necessity for any other to make us sensible of the nature of relations that are founded on an arbitrary idea, formed either by accident and occasion, or by our own fancy; as, if I should take it into my head, without any foundation, that pearls are generally an inch in diameter, I must, in that case, look upon all the pearls we have in England as very small.

What has been here said of greatness is manifestly applicable to all the other qualities, of *long*, *broad*, *happy*, *unhappy*, *convenient*, *inconvenient*, *easy*, *difficult*, *rich*, *poor*, *good*, *bad*, *excellent*, and many others of a similar nature, that have no determinate sense, but by a relation founded on an

5-2. It fills on various qualities.

PART II.

arbitrary and accidental idea formed within our own minds. A man thought himſelf miſerable in having a ſlight head-ach: being afterwards ſeized with a giddineſs and violent ſwimming in the head, the firſt reflection that occurred to him was, *how happy he was when he had only his firſt head-ach.* We here ſee that the arbitrary idea, on which the compariſon and relation are founded, changes the ſignification, and in a manner the nature, of the qualities of *happy* and *miſerable.*

373. Illuſion, as to the idea we imagine we have of excellence.

This may ſerve to ſhew us the illuſion of certain philoſophers, who, like the author of Logic, intitled the Art of Thinking, aſſert, that there is to be diſcovered in all men an idea of *excellence.* This, properly conſidered, means no more than that every man, according to his fancy, forms an arbitrary idea of *excellence*, juſt as chance, occaſion, experience, conſtitution, or imagination, happens to ſuggeſt a certain degree of goodneſs which he calls excellence or perfection, but which, not being the ſame with others, no longer conſtitutes the ſame idea of excellence in different minds, as it is entirely different in all men, who all concur only in making uſe of the ſame word *excellence*, in order to expreſs the higheſt degree which each of them fancies of a uſeful or pleaſing quality: but this higheſt degree being arbitrary and various in all men, all men likewiſe,

wiſe, according to different circumſtances, have different ideas of excellence. CH. XXVIII.

374. Even abſolute ideas become arbitrary in the common practice of life.

In fine, what merits our attention, and has eſcaped that of Locke, with reſpect to relative and non-relative ideas, is, that, in the examples he has given of *abſolute* or *poſitive*, that is to ſay, non-relative ideas, ſuch as *white*, *black*, *happy*, *ſweet*, &c. thoſe very ideas are not entirely abſolute in general practice, and according to the common application made of them by the mind. The mind, for example, rarely applies the idea of *white*, or *ſweet*, but with reſpect to a certain degree of whiteneſs and ſweetneſs, which it actually fancies, and compares with a certain arbitrary idea it has. To illuſtrate this by an example: in Africa, a yellow or olive complexion is conſidered and called *fair*; the ſame complexion, ſeen by the ſame perſon among Europeans, no longer appears *fair*, but rather *black*: we therefore call nothing *white* or *fair* but what is ſo with reſpect to a certain degree of whiteneſs we have in our minds, and which we judge ſuitable or unſuitable to the object we call *white*; ſo that, if the whiteneſs of the thing appears to us in a leſs degree than what we arbitrarily conſider as genuine, we no longer eſteem it *white*. Thus it daily happens that we look upon linen and paper as white; but, when ſhewn us with other linen or paper of much ſuperior whiteneſs, we begin

to

PART II.

to think them brown. This is an evident ſign that we have no fixed or entirely abſolute idea as to the term *white*; for, if it were ſo, we muſt, in every circumſtance, always conſider as white the thing in which we ſhould conſtantly find the ſame degree of whiteneſs.

375. Extrinſic denominations.

It is neceſſary to ſay a word or two of relations called *extrinſic denominations:* theſe are *qualities attributed to a being, with reſpect only to the diſpoſition of another being relative to it*; for example, *to be ſeen, known, admired, preceded*, &c. which manifeſtly ſuppoſe the diſpoſition of another being that *ſees, knows, admires, precedes it*, &c. In like manner, when we ſay a thing is *firſt, ſimilar, equal*, &c. we neceſſarily ſuppoſe the diſpoſition or ſituation of ſomething elſe.

And, in fact, whoever ſpeaks of a *firſt*, implies another object that is ſecond; he that mentions *ſimilar*, or *equal*, ſpeaks of ſomething to which the thing mentioned is *ſimilar* or *equal:* ſo that, were we to ſuppoſe all beings deſtroyed, except one only, though this one ſhould ſtill remain as it was before, it would nevertheleſs ceaſe to be ſeen, known, praiſed, admired, or eſteemed; to be the firſt, or third; or be followed, accompanied, &c. for, were it to be alone, by whom ſhould it be *ſeen?* of whom or what would it be the *firſt* or *laſt?* and to whom or what would it be *ſimilar* or *equal?* &c. Theſe are attributes or denominations

nations merely *extrinſic*; that is to ſay, attributes foreign to the thing, and ſuch as are attributed to it only by ſuppoſing the diſpoſition of another being, that changes nothing in the thing itſelf to which thoſe extrinſic denominations are applicable.

376. When the other does not make any alteration in the thing.

I ſay *merely extrinſic*; for, *to be beaten*, for example, might be looked upon as an extrinſic denomination, as it implies the diſpoſition of another being: but it is plain that he who is *beaten* is changed in himſelf; and therefore, *to be beaten* is not a denomination merely extrinſic: for the ſame reaſon, *to be moved, warmed, divided, enlarged*, &c. *extrinſic denominations*, however, are not leſs real relations, as they include the idea of another thing beſides the one named.

377. Whether relations are independent of our thought.

We ſhall conclude this article with remarking the frivolous perplexity and trouble in which people ſometimes involve themſelves, in order to determine whether relations ſubſiſt in things independent of our thoughts; as, for example, whether numbers, which are at bottom nothing but relations, be things ſubſiſting of themſelves, and diſtinct from our minds: in order to reſolve the queſtion, we have only to explain the terms or ideas.

378. Equivocation in the word NUMBER.

If we underſtand by *number* the beings that ſubſiſt diſtinct from us, each in its unity, but that give occaſion to the mind to conceive a collection

PART II. lection of unities under a ſingle idea, which takes the name of *number*; in that caſe, number does exiſt independent of the thought and mind; that is, things numbered, or different unities conceived by us under a ſingle idea, exiſt. If we mean by *number* that thought of the mind which unites different unities under a ſingle idea; or if we underſtand the relation of thoſe unities, ſo that the ſecond unity ſuppoſes in our minds the idea of the firſt, and the third the idea of the ſecond; or, in fine, if we mean that faculty the mind has of multiplying at pleaſure and combining thoſe abſtracted ideas of unities, either one with the other, one with reſpect to the other, or one ſeparate from the other, without any regard to things diſtinct from our minds—number, in that ſenſe, is not independent of the mind and thought; as it is, in that caſe, the mere exerciſe of them with reſpect to things numbered. *To be numbered*, however, is an *extrinſic denomination*, which ſuppoſes an intelligence that numbers them, and ſees the relation one unity has to another, or to ſeveral unities: this relation is called *ſecond*, *third*, &c. conſidering unities as ſucceeding one another, and is named *two*, *three*, *four*, &c. viewing unities collectively together in their totality.

PART

PART III.

First Truths relative to Spiritual Beings.

CHAPTER I.

Of the nature of ſpiritual beings in general, and of the human ſoul in particular.

370. What is meant by SOUL, or MIND.

WE underſtand by the word *ſoul*, or *mind*, a ſubſtance ſimilar to that which is in us capable of the operation we call *idea*, *thought*, or *knowledge*, and of another operation, called *willing* or *deſiring*. Theſe two operations, the ſecond of which ſuppoſes the firſt, and which conſequently ſpring from the ſame ſubſtance, called *mind* or *ſoul*, are conſidered as having each its peculiar faculty. What is called idea, thought, or knowledge, has the *underſtanding* for its faculty; what is termed *willing* has for faculty the *will*: that is, ſpeaking with preciſion, the ſoul, while it thinks, is called *underſtanding*; and when it wills, or deſires, is named *will*.

If it be aſked, what idea, thought or knowledge, will or deſire, are, I ſhall not attempt to give any definition of them, in order to make them

PART III. them more clear than they already are to the Reader. I might perhaps explain thoſe words *idea* and *will* by other words that would nearly expreſs the ſame thing, but not make them more intelligible; as their ſignification is clearly in our minds, and as fully as it can be, conceived, if we pay any attention to what is expreſſed by the words *idea* or *knowledge*, *deſire* or *will*.

380. Whether the ſoul is corporeal.

Some perſons imagine they are juſtifiable in aſking, on this occaſion, whether it be really true that we are poſſeſſed of a ſoul or mind, as it is not known whether what we call mind be not a thing corporeal, reſulting from particles of matter imperceptible to our ſenſes, and even to our knowledge and reflections, which are, in fact, all derived from our ſenſes: hence they would endeavour to conclude, that, as we have no evident certainty of the matter, we ſhould not abſolutely deny the mind to be corporeal. Nay, they pretend to give additional weight to this difficulty by the following reflection—that the ſoul muſt be dependent on the body, and matter in its ſubſtance as well as its operations; as *the nature of the operation follows the nature of the being*, according to an axiom admitted by philoſophers; ſo that, as the operation of the ſoul is manifeſtly dependent on the body, of which we are made ſenſible by experience, the ſubſtance of the ſoul is likewiſe dependent on it, and is in itſelf cor-

corporeal, and a kind of modification of the body and matter. In order to anſwer theſe objections, let us examine them one after another, and diſtinguiſh what is clear and certain from what is involved in obſcurity and uncertainty.

381. The queſtion does not alter the truth of the exiſtence of ſpiritual beings.

1ſt. All that can be attributed to the mind, with the utmoſt efforts of human imagination, is that of its being corporeal or material; but this does not at all affect the reality of its exiſtence. Be it material or otherwiſe, be it compoſed or not compoſed of atoms, dependent or independent of the body; in whatever manner we conſider it, there ſtill exiſts in me ſomething that *thinks*, and *wills* or *deſires*: this ſomething is what I call my *mind* or *ſoul*, and which I diſtinguiſh, with the ſtrongeſt and cleareſt evidence, from every being in which I can diſcern nothing of what I call *thinking* and *deſiring*. Now every being, in which I can perceive nothing of what I call to *think* and *deſire*, is what I call *body*; and, in what I call *body*, I obſerve alſo properties termed *ſpace* and *motion*, which I can by no means perceive in what I call *mind* in general; nor can I even perceive the mind to be ſuſceptible of thoſe qualities. Thus I both clearly and preciſely diſtinguiſh what I call *mind*, and what I name *body*, without any poſſibility of doubting hereafter either of their exiſtence, or real difference, as I find each of thoſe beings

PART III.

manifeſtly ſuſceptible of modifications that are not applicable to the other.

382. We are ignorant of their internal nature.

To know, at preſent, in what the internal nature of minds conſiſts, what conſtitutes their real eſſence, and their eſſential and phyſical difference from bodies, in order to diſcern intuitively whether it be poſſible for thought to reſult from a combination of imperceptible particles, is a point no way neceſſary to the knowledge here ſought. This knowledge neither ought, nor can be of a different nature from what human knowledge eſſentially is; and this can never reach the internal nature of beings; but it is not therefore the leſs evident or convincing.

383. Their exiſtence is not therefore leſs certain.

I neither know nor perceive evidently the internal nature of fire, nor its radical and phyſical difference from water: Muſt I therefore conclude, that no fire exiſts; that its nature is not different from that of water; or that I muſt not act quite differently, with regard to the one, from what I ſhould do with reſpect to the other? Shall I therefore judge it improper to immerſe the body in water by way of refreſhing it, or to approach the fire in order to warm me? Would this knowledge of the internal nature of things beyond our capacity, be of any advantage to us with regard to our conduct and opinions in life?

The

The application of all this is natural to our ſubject. We know not the internal nature of our mind ſo far as it may be known, or as God knows it; but we know it as far as we are capable of knowing it, or as is conſiſtent with human underſtanding: therefore we no leſs ſee, as far as men can ſee, for the uſe and conduct of life, its difference from the body, and that one has nothing ſimilar to the other.

384. We know them as far as we are capable of knowing them.

To conclude however, as ſome endeavour to do, that the human mind or ſoul is corporeal, becauſe we do not intuitively ſee whether our thoughts may not reſult from a combination of material particles imperceptible to our ſenſes, is much the ſame as attempting to conclude that the body is ſpiritual, becauſe we do not evidently diſcern whether it be not ſome thought that conſtitutes motion, impenetrability, and ſpace, which are modifications that appear to us eſſential to body and matter. Into what ſtrange abſurdities muſt we fall, when we pretend to draw concluſions from a principle of which we are totally ignorant! This is however the method which ſome modern philoſophers ſeem to have eſtabliſhed; but it is the moſt frivolous and idle conduct of which a rational mind is capable: for, in ſhort, what we do not ſee, is, with reſpect to our knowledge, as if it had no exiſtence; we cannot argue or reaſon about it,

385. We ſhould not judge the ſoul to be corporeal.

PART III.

as it affords nothing to think, imagine or conclude. Let us confine the mind within its proper limits, and we ſhall always be rational; if we go beyond them, our thoughts muſt be viſionary, and our language unintelligible.

386. In what ſenſe the ſoul might be ſaid to be corporeal.

Beſides, when we imagine that the idea of thoſe who hold the ſoul to be corporeal is not improbable, as its operation is corporeal, we ſhould examine what is meant by theſe words, *the operation of the ſoul is corporeal.* Do we thereby underſtand that the ſoul operates only by the mutual relation and reciprocal connection that are between the ſoul and the body, while the body is in a certain diſpoſition? If we mean no more, the matter is indubitable, and daily experience ſhews it; but, if the ſoul cannot act without the body, the machine of the body, on the other hand, cannot act without the ſoul; and, as the dependence of the body on the ſoul does not lead us to ſay that the body is ſpiritual, neither ſhould the dependence of the ſoul on the body induce us to declare the ſoul corporeal. Thoſe two parts of man have an intimate connection in their operations; but a connection between two parts does not make one the other.

387. The union of the ſoul and body is incomprehenſible.

Should I be aſked, however, whence aroſe ſo neceſſary a relation, and ſuch a wonderful connection, I can give no reply from the mere light

light of reaſon; I cannot penetrate ſo far, neither will I endeavour. Thoſe who have attempted it have ſometimes diſplayed a fertile imagination, but never adduced one ſolid argument on the ſubject. There are many people of this turn; but it is not that of a ſound philoſopher; for, by frequently indulging the mind in the purſuit of vain notions, it gradually loſes a reliſh for judicious ideas, and is ſoon led to confound one with the other: beſides, as perſons of this caſt are conſcious that their imaginary notions do not carry conviction, they are not apt to be firmly convinced of any thing: and indeed we ſee minds of this ſort eaſily ſeduced by the glimmering of a new diſcovery, and ready to relinquiſh ideas to which they were blindly attached, in order to embrace opinions directly contrary. To avoid ſuch inconſiſtencies, let us never undertake to explain what is inexplicable, nor to comprehend things unintelligible.

328. The ſoul is evidently different from the body.

As the connexion between the ſoul and body does not make the body ſpiritual, we ſhould be no leſs certain that this connection does not render the ſoul corporeal; though we had not other proofs from religion and reaſon on the ſubject. Notwithſtanding this incomprehenſible connexion, we clearly perceive however that the ſoul is not the body, as fire is not water;

PART III.

that all the experimental properties of the one are by no means the properties of the other; that the two ideas we have of them are as different and as diſtinct, at leaſt, as from any other objects whatſoever, in which we can diſcern a manifeſt diſparity; and, in fine, that, as we have no more room to ſuſpect *thought* to be a modification of the body, than *ſpace* to be a modification of thought, we cannot therefore rationally deny the body and mind to be two different ſubſtances.

CHAPTER II.

Of the properties of the ſoul.

389. To THINK and WILL are properties of a ſpiritual ſubſtance.

AFTER having eſtabliſhed the reality and exiſtence of a ſomething within us, which we find capable of two functions that we call *thinking* and *deſiring*, and which does not appear to us to have any relation, as to ſubſtance, with what we denominate body, we ſhould look upon it as a prepoſterous abuſe of all language, and a ſubverſion of every human idea, not to conſider the ſoul henceforth as a ſubſtance different from the body. Of this ſubſtance of the ſoul we have now to examine the peculiar properties,

beſides

beſides the two eſſential, which we term *underſtanding*, and *will*; or, in other words, the faculty of *thinking*, and the faculty of *willing* or *deſiring*.

390. Experience ſhews what theſe faculties are.

In reality, there ſeems to be but little occaſion for this enquiry; for, as there are none of my Readers who are not ſenſible of every thing that paſſes within them, with a little attention they may know, or even they already know, as much, from their own reflections, as any explanation of mine can poſſibly convey; and ſcarcely any thing remains for me to do, but to point out the names ſuitable to the faculties and ſenſations of which they daily experience the effects, in order to enable them by that means to avoid confuſion in their arguments and expreſſions on a ſubject of ſo great importance.

391. Pure intelligence, imagination, memory, ſenſation, and ſentiment.

The ſoul forms *ideas* or *thoughts*; this is what is called *intelligence*: the intelligence is ſometimes ſolely taken up with itſelf, or with what paſſes within it, without attending to the idea of any body, or any corporeal image; this I call *pure intelligence*: if it conceives the idea of a body, or of a corporeal image, I call that *imagination*, or *fancy*: the ſoul, having laid aſide ideas for a while, afterwards recalls them; this is termed *memory*: it acquires the greater part of its ideas by the help of the ſenſes; and, when it actually derives them from that channel, it is called

PART III.

called *ſenſation:* if the ſenſation be accompanied by any thing pleaſing or diſpleaſing, I then call it more particularly *ſentiment:* the peculiar faculty of the ſoul, whence we imagine ſenſation and ſentiment to proceed, is called *the ſenſitive ſoul.*

392. Various ſignifications of the word WILL.

The *will* aſſumes various names, like the *underſtanding:* if it be neceſſarily inclined to objects, as when it inclines to happineſs in general, I call it *natural inclination,* or *propenſity:* if it inclines to an object, and yet has the power of reſiſting that inclination, I call it *free-will:* and when it has ſome liking to an object, the ſoul not being determined by free-will to indulge that liking, I give it the name of *diſpoſition* or *tendency.*

The word *will* is alſo ſometimes taken for the faculty itſelf of *willing* or *deſiring*; and, on other occaſions, for the actual exerciſe of the will: in fine, it is taken, at other times, in a more vague ſenſe, applicable to all the various ſignifications that have been mentioned, without particularly indicating one more than another.

393. Locke makes free-will dependent on the underſtanding.

With reſpect to *free-agency* and *will,* Mr. Locke, and Mr. Le Clerc in copying him, have made a copious and elaborate diſſertation in order to undeceive thoſe who might imagine that *free-will* is the ſame faculty with the *will*; whereas, ſay they, it is *a faculty of the underſtanding.* After repeat-

repeatedly peruſing thoſe profound reflections with ſerious attention, I muſt confeſs they ſtruck me as the part of that philoſopher's works in which he ſeems to have leaſt underſtood himſelf. And, indeed, can any perſon be miſtaken as to the idea of thoſe different faculties? Does not every man know that it is the ſame ſoul which produces various operations? and, according as we find more or leſs difference in thoſe operations, do we not ſuppoſe a greater or leſs number of different faculties whence they proceed; although theſe different faculties are, in fact, but one and the ſame ſubſtance, which is the ſoul? But in this one ſubſtance I have never known any perſon but Mr. Locke to confound the faculty of *underſtanding* with that of *free-will*; and I even believe that it is impoſſible to confound them together, if they are conſidered with any degree of attention. Is not the ſoul capable of thinking? Conſidering it ſimply in that light, I call it *underſtanding* or *intelligence*. Is it not capable, on certain occaſions, of indulging or rejecting the deſire of a thing by its own will and choice? In that reſpect, I call it *freedom* or *free-will*. Should it be thought better to admit but two principal faculties in the ſoul, that is, the *underſtanding* and *will*, to which the reſt might be referred, it is plain that the capacity

PART III.

city of desiring a thing, or not desiring it, relates more immediately, and more naturally, to the *will* than to the *understanding*.

The terms being thus explained, in ten or twelve full pages of Mr. Locke on the subject there will appear much perplexity and trouble that he might have avoided. It is surprising that Mr. Le Clerc should have had patience enough to copy so many obscurities, without ever endeavouring to throw any light upon them. It has been suspected that these writers had some secret motives for their conduct on the occasion: out of respect to them, I shall avoid entering into any enquiry on the matter. What they however have omitted, I shall endeavour to supply in subsequent remarks on the idea and nature of liberty.

CHAP-

CHAPTER III.

Of the liberty of the human ſoul.

394. What is called free in us.

IT is certain that there is a ſomething in us, which we call *liberty* or *freedom*. We underſtand what we mean when we pronounce theſe words, and conſequently we affix an idea to them. This idea is the idea of that we experience in ourſelves in what we call *the exerciſe of our liberty*; which exerciſe, being an internal ſentiment, is alſo of conſequence an idea as clear and diſtinct as poſſibly can be.

395. The idea affixe to this expreſſion.

I requeſt therefore, that every one will recollect what his thoughts are, when he hears another ſay, or when he makes uſe of, the following words—*I am free in that reſpect, and I will do as I like on the occaſion.* For example, in the choice of two guineas that may be offered to me: if any perſon ſhould take it into his head to inſiſt ſeriouſly that I am under the neceſſity of taking one rather than the other, all the anſwer I ſhould give him would be to laugh at the abſurdity; ſo intimately and neceſſarily am I perſuaded that it is in my power to take the firſt inſtead of the ſecond, or the ſecond inſtead of the firſt. Some perſons

PART III.

perſons ſay that this example does not demonſtrate an exerciſe of liberty, becauſe there is no reaſon for giving a preference on either ſide, or taking one guinea rather than the other. But their obſervation is foreign to the purpoſe: the queſtion is not to know whether it be neceſſary to have a reaſon, and what reaſon we ſhould have, for the exerciſe of liberty: we only want to know whether it be not in my power to take, or not to take, one of the guineas; to take the firſt in preference to the ſecond, or the ſecond inſtead of the firſt? Nor can there indeed be given a more ſimple, preciſe, diſtinct, and juſt idea of liberty, than what every man feels from this example. People may make uſe of what other terms they pleaſe: but it is to the idea I have mentioned that men commonly affix the word *liberty*; and, in order to define what it means, I ſay it is *the diſpoſition a man feels within himſelf, of his capacity to act or not to act, to chuſe or not to chuſe a thing, at the ſame moment.*

396. Whether it be in our power to do, or not to do, certain things.

But it will be ſaid perhaps, it is on that itſelf which paſſes within us that all the difficulty hangs. We are indeed ſenſible that we chuſe one of the two guineas, and not the other; and, to ſpeak with ſtill greater preciſion, that, at a certain time, we take one of the two guineas, or we do not take it: but we have no idea that we take it, or chuſe it, in ſuch a manner, that,

at

at the ſame moment, by the mere power and determination of our will, we may refrain from taking it.

397. This may be referred to a firſt truth.

That all men have the ſentiment above mentioned, as to taking or not taking one of two guineas, is a fact to which each perſon can bear evidence himſelf; and, if the teſtimony of any one appear to contradict that of others, and that it be neceſſary to determine which of theſe two oppoſite ſentiments is right, we muſt then recur to what has been laid down as the foundation of this Treatiſe, with reſpect to the rule of truth called *common ſenſe*, or *the general opinion of mankind*. Should any doubt ſtill remain about the matter, it may, I think, be entirely removed by the following reflection.

398. A curious expedient for judging of liberty or free-will.

You ſay I am not free, and that it does not depend on the mere determination of my will and choice whether I ſhall move my hand or not. If that be the caſe, it muſt neceſſarily be decreed, that, within a quarter of an hour hence, I either ſhall, or ſhall not, raiſe my hand thrice ſucceſſively: I cannot therefore a ter this neceſſary determination. This being ſuppoſed, in caſe I lay a wager on one ſide rather than the other, I can be a winner only on one ſide, that is, either by laying that I ſhall raiſe my hand thrice, or that I ſhall not. If you ſeriouſly pretend that I am not free, you cannot reaſonably refuſe the following

PART III.

lowing offer: I will lay you a thouſand guineas to one, that, with reſpect to moving my hand, I ſhall do quite the reverſe of what you may contend for, and you ſhall take which ſide you pleaſe: ſo that, if you lay that I ſhall raiſe my hand, I lay that I will not; and if you lay that I ſhall not, I lay a thouſand guineas to one that I will raiſe it. Do you think the offer advantageous to you? Anſwer, Yes or No. If you think it advantageous, why can you not accept the wager without paſſing for a fool, or being ſuch in reality? And, if you do not conſider it as advantageous, whence can ſuch an idea ariſe, unleſs from the neceſſary and invincible opinion you have of my being free, and that it is in my power to make you loſe ſuch a wager, not only once, but a million of times if you ſhould have the folly to repeat it ſo often. This is an argument that is not derived from Scholaſtics: it is neither abſtruſe, ſubtile, nor far-fetched; but it will therefore make a more irreſiſtible and lively impreſſion on the mind; and we may even defy thoſe moderns who have attempted to treat of the ſubject, to give an anſwer that may be underſtood as clearly as the objection, and conſidered as a rational argument, and not an obſcurity.

This new reflection, added to what has been ſaid (N°. 60.) to confirm the exiſtence of liberty,

or

of free-will, by a proof drawn from the general ſentiments of mankind, will, I think, furniſh us with the firſt truths, or ideas, of which the human mind is capable, with reſpect to free-will. This then is a firſt principle ſo clear and obvious, that, whatever objections may be made to it, will only tend, by their obſcurity or extravagancy, to confirm us more ſtrongly in the opinion with which Nature inſpires all mankind. CHAP. III.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the act of the underſtanding requiſite for the exerciſe of free-will.

399. The will is guided by the underſtanding, which ſhews what is good or eligible.

IT is generally allowed that the will is a blind power, which acts only as it is guided by a light or operation of the underſtanding; and it is equally admitted that the will cannot incline but to what is good: hence philoſophers in general conclude that the underſtanding muſt point out to the will what is good, before the latter can be determined and come to action.

400. The underſtanding is a neceſſary power.

As it is likewiſe unanimouſly confeſſed that the underſtanding is a neceſſary power, and that we are not maſters of the light it holds out to the will, ſome perſons therefore imagine that we do

PART III.

do not poſſeſs real liberty or free-will, as the will neceſſarily acts always in conformity to the light of the underſtanding, and we are not the maſters of that light.

401. Two lights in the underſtanding, in each deliberation.

By way of explaining this myſtery many people ſay, that, in all deliberations of the will, that is, on occaſions of exerciſing our liberty, either to act or not act, to will or not will, the underſtanding holds up two ſorts of light, each of which points out to the will what is good on each ſide: after this, by virtue of its liberty, it is freely determined on one ſide or the other. Theſe two ſorts of light are opinions that regulate the actual exerciſe of the will, and are nearly like the following: the mind, for example, might ſay within itſelf, *It is good to gain heaven; but to gain heaven I muſt not purſue revenge, therefore it is good not to purſue it:* on the other hand, it might argue thus, *It is good and pleaſing to follow my inclination; now this prompts me to purſue revenge, therefore it is good not to refrain from purſuing it.* Between theſe two *benefits* or *advantages* the will, ſay philoſophers, exerciſes its liberty, embracing that ſpecies of good which is pleaſing to it in the moment of determination.

402. Whether the will can reſiſt what the underſtanding repreſents as the beſt.

But other philoſophers ſtart a new difficulty, with regard to this method of explaining the exerciſe of liberty; for, ſay they, as the will inclines only to what is *good*, and not to what is evil,

evil, it muſt incline to what is better, in preference to what may be leſs good: a leſs good, in reſpect to what is better, being really bad; and a leſſer evil, where there is a neceſſity of choice, becomes a real good: ſo that, when it is abſolutely neceſſary to chuſe between a greater and leſs pain, the leſſer is a good, and the greater an evil. As the underſtanding, in our deliberations, is ſuppoſed to repreſent what is beſt, the will therefore cannot help conforming to it, as it neceſſarily follows the light of the underſtanding, which is the light that governs and directs it.

403. Example.

Thus, ſay they, a man of rank and prudence, who ſhould happen to think of acting the part of a mountebank in public, in order to amuſe himſelf, might form two practical opinions: *It is good to divert the mind; now to play the mountebank in public will divert the mind; therefore it is good to do ſo.* On the other hand, he might argue after this manner: *It is good to be careful of my reputation; and I ſhall ſhew my care of it if I avoid diverting my mind by acting the mountebank; it is therefore good to avoid it.* In theſe two kinds of good, the underſtanding perceiving a better on one ſide, that is, *in avoiding to act the mountebank,* it is impoſſible, ſay they, but he muſt avoid it; and conſequently that man is not free, when every body ſuppoſes he really is ſo.

PART III.

404. The application of the underſtanding often depends on the will.

With reſpect to theſe difficulties, many perſons reply, that the underſtanding is indeed a neceſſary power, ſo far as to repreſent neceſſarily the object it conſiders; but that it depends on the will to apply it to one object rather than another, or at leaſt to prevent it from being applied to any particular object: thus, ſay they, the will is always maſter; for, though it cannot act contrary to the light of the underſtanding, it has, however, the power to prevent it from having that light, by diverting it from thinking on particular truths.

405. This reflection is not ſufficient for the preſent queſtion.

This anſwer only ſerves to place the difficulty at a greater diſtance, without ſolving it; for, in ſhort, if the will be determined to divert the underſtanding from conſidering a truth, ſome light of the underſtanding muſt have ſhewn the will that it is better to divert the thoughts from ſuch a truth: and moreover, as the will, according to them, cannot avoid following the better that is pointed out by the underſtanding, it will therefore be found, that it was determined, through neceſſity, to divert its thought from the truth in queſtion.

If all theſe difficulties be once comprehended, it will be an eaſy matter to convey a clear idea of the anſwer I think ſhould be given to them; it is, that ſeveral philoſophers, by their endeavours to explain the nature of liberty and will, have

have only involved it in greater obſcurity by thoſe very explanations.

406. The underſtanding does not ſhew what is beſt, independent of the will,

They ſuppoſe then, that it is the buſineſs of the underſtanding to ſhew the will what is beſt, before the determination of the will; but the beſt very frequently, as to the point in queſtion, is only ſo by the diſpoſition itſelf of the will, which makes the beſt by its own choice and determination.

407. but in conjunction with it.

It is true, when the will is determined, the underſtanding on its part judges at the ſame time that ſuch a thing is actually the beſt, without having however preceded the will, unleſs to point out to it what the object is in itſelf, and in its true nature, independently of our underſtanding or will, and of thoſe impreſſions we may thence receive. The object therefore may be found *better* or *worſe* at the mere option of the will, in the actual exerciſe of its freedom. The two different practical opinions, adduced on this occaſion, are of no uſe in ſolving the difficulty; for, if it be alledged, that, in different points of view, the judgement repreſents a better on each ſide, it is ſtill true that the will chuſes one ſide in preference to the other, and conſequently a better preferably to another better; and that to which it is determined becomes, with reſpect to its choice, actually the *poſitive* or *real better*, as to circumſtances. Now the underſtanding

PART III.

ſtanding did not repreſent this abſolute better to it, before its own particular and free determination: it is the will alone therefore that is determined between two *betters*, if I may be allowed ſo to expreſs myſelf, and that forms the abſolute better by its choice, determining the underſtanding, at the ſame time, to judge the party it has embraced better for it, according to circumſtances. To ſpeak more properly, the ſoul then chuſes; and, by the ſame motion, it judges better what it chuſes. Now, as far as it chuſes and embraces a thing, we call it *will*; and, in judging a thing better, we give it the name of *underſtanding*: theſe diſtinctions, made between the underſtanding and will, are but different views of a motion of the ſoul which is the ſame in fact, and which, under different points of view, receives different appellations. To clear up this point effectually, the Reader is deſired to peruſe the opinions, or firſt truths, contained in Part II. Chap. XV.

408. To what good is the mind at all times inclined?

Good, in general, therefore, is ſaid to be any object whatever, to which the will is inclined in preference to another; and, in that ſenſe, we ſay that the will is always neceſſarily inclined to what is *good*.

The word *good* is more generally taken for the object to which the will commonly inclines, but abſtracted from the idea of its being actually deter-

determined to embrace or reject it: thus the pleasures of the senses are called *good*, and *advantages*; and, when a christian philosopher renounces them, worldly minds consider him as a weak man who quits what is *good*.

409. The good, independent of the will, is not the thing in question here.

This second notion, however, of what is good, appears defective; as, independently even of philosophy or christianity, what is a *good* to one is not the same to another; and what is *good* for most people is not so with respect to some. Champagne wine is good; but it is not so to me, because I do not like it: Music is a *good*, that is, a very great pleasure to some; and it is an *evil*, that is, a pain to others. But, as I have observed, the appellation of *good* has been given to things to which the human will appeared to be most frequently inclined; but it may not be inclined to them, and it is sometimes inclined to other objects different from those which common custom denominates *good:* but none of those objects are by any means the *absolute good* to which the will is always necessarily inclined.

410. The will is not always inclined to God, though he is in himself the ABSOLUTE GOOD;

But is not God an *absolute good?* Yes, doubtless, as he is the only object in which we should delight, and that can satisfy the desires of the will, when it is devoted to it; but it is not the *absolute good*, as far as *good* is the object to which the will is always necessarily inclined; as the will

PART III.

is neither neceſſarily nor always inclined to God; and it is that itſelf conſtitutes its culpability.

411. nor to the object of our natural inclinations.

In that ſenſe alſo, our particular and moſt natural inclinations, which are diſcovered in us independent of our liberty, are not preciſely our *good*, becauſe we do not always follow them; and it is even frequently very rational not to follow, but reſiſt them. When therefore it is ſaid that free-will is always neceſſarily inclined to what is *good*, I do not ſee that this ſhould mean any thing elſe, but that *it is always inclined to the object to which it inclines:* ſo that the action by which it inclines to it, in preference to another object, is called *choice*; and that object, inaſmuch as the will is inclined to it, is called a *good*.

412. There is in us a kind of will that is not free.

I have ſaid *free-will*; for there is in us a propenſity that is likewiſe called *will*, which is neceſſary in us, and which neceſſarily prompts us to wiſh in general to be happy. This muſt not be confounded with our particular inclinations, that incline us to particular objects; for neither this neceſſary propenſity, nor natural inclination to what is good in general, is the point in queſtion, when we are ſpeaking of the exerciſe of liberty.

413. The underſtanding informs the will as to the object to which it inclines.

If it ſhould be ſaid that there is no occaſion for any act of the underſtanding to direct free-will to *good*; as every object, to which it inclines inde-

independently of the act of the underſtanding, is ſaid to be, is conſidered, and becomes a *good*, from the very circumſtance of its inclining to it; I anſwer, it is certain that the act of the underſtanding has no ſhare in forming the *good*, taken in its ſtrict and formal preciſion, that is, in the preciſion of that preference which the will gives to one object rather than another: but this preference only ſuppoſes an act of the underſtanding, that has made known what the object preferred is in itſelf, independently of us; and another act, that has ſhewn what the object not preferred is. Now, as thoſe two objects are ſo conſidered that the will may incline to either, and that, according to different occaſions, it does incline ſometimes to one, and ſometimes to the other, thoſe objects are called and conſidered as good; though neither, in particular, is by any means that *good* to which the will always neceſſarily inclines; as it may incline to either the one or the other, and does at different times incline to each.

414. The will has no occaſion for any thing beſides itſelf, in order to incline to a known object.

But if the will be thus inclined of itſelf, and without any act, to determine the underſtanding to one object rather than to another, it will then act only becauſe it acts, it will deſire or will only becauſe it deſires, and that uninfluenced by any motive; which appears incomprehenſible. To this I anſwer, that nothing is incomprehenſible

PART III.

in the matter, but the perplexity and confuſion voluntarily occaſioned by ourſelves; for, in ſhort, is it incomprehenſible to judge that the will, in order to determine in favour of one object rather than another, has occaſion for no other knowledge but what is given by the underſtanding, with reſpect to the nature of the object to which it is inclined? What other motive is wanting to the will, unleſs what it derives from itſelf, and by its own proper motion, which actually inclines to one object rather than to another; and which, in circumſtances exactly ſimilar, will, at another time, perhaps incline to the ſecond in preference to the firſt?

415. Free-will may purſue different reſolutions in ſimilar circumſtances.

Some perſons aſſert that the circumſtances cannot be ſimilar, if the will does not follow the ſame determination: for, in ſimilar circumſtances, why ſhould it not make the ſame choice? The anſwer is obvious—Becauſe it is free, and that, by the exerciſe of its freedom, it makes the difference of circumſtances; which, at the ſame time, in fact, ſuppoſes or occaſions a difference of circumſtances in the underſtanding; for ſuch is the imperious aſcendant of free-will, that, in applying the underſtanding itſelf to the object to which it is determined, it makes it perceive qualities which it would not perhaps diſcover without it, or that are not perhaps really in it: but this view of the underſtanding is no

more

more than a concomitant of the will, as hath been obſerved; and does not conſtitute a prior motive, independent of the free and actual motion of the will, which is determined by its own mere voluntary choice: ſuch a prior motive would be a perfect chimera, or a real deſtruction of liberty.

410. Every motive, independent of the will, and that ſhould determine it, would deſtroy liberty.

And indeed this motive, independent of the exerciſe itſelf of liberty, or of the free determination of the will, muſt be ſuch that the will might be able to reſiſt it, or not: if it ſhould not have power to reſiſt it, from that very circumſtance liberty would be deſtroyed, as the will ſhould neceſſarily find itſelf ſubject to ſomething that would not be its free exerciſe: ſhould it be able to reſiſt it, it would not of courſe be determined to follow it. Let me then aſk, What would determine it, unleſs itſelf by its own voluntary choice and peculiar motion? There is then the ſame difficulty, as to the determination of the will, with reſpect to the motive, either in following or not following it, as there is with regard to the object, in being inclined or not inclined to it.

We muſt then acknowledge in free-will a power and capacity of inclining to one thing in preference to another, and of following or reſiſting a motive; and, provided the ſoul knows the object, the will finds of itſelf, and in itſelf, inde-

PART III. independently of every prior act of the understanding, sufficient to determine it, and to form to itself its own peculiar and sole motive. To seek then, out of the will, any other thing as necessary to it, would be the same thing as to look for the exercise of liberty, where liberty is not to be found.

CHAPTER V.

Elucidation of a difficulty, with respect to liberty, that has exercised the minds of some eminent philosophers.

417. Whether it be for want of a motive that a man of sense cannot act foolishly.

IT does not appear to me that there is any thing to engage our further attention on the subject of the preceding chapter, unless it be the question that is asked, Why a man of sense cannot be determined to commit an unbecoming action, such as it would be in a magistrate to act the part of a mountebank publicly? The most plausible reason that has been given for this moral impossibility, is, that the man of sense would then have no motive by which he could be determined; whereas, if the will finds its motive in itself, it cannot want it on the occasion in question, no more than on any other: so that one of

of theſe two things muſt neceſſarily follow; either the man of ſenſe may actually play the mountebank publicly, which can never be, as we cannot ſuppoſe ſuch a thing; or it will be a moral impoſſibility for him to play the mountebank, which appears falſe, as it is very freely, and by his own voluntary choice, that he reſolves to refrain from acting ſuch a part, and that he neither wants limbs nor ſtrength for playing the mountebank in public, or wherever he likes.

This difficulty, which has been conſidered two different ways by two of the greateſt men of the preſent century, is the more worthy of attention, as, notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid by them, there ſtill ſeems to remain ſomething on the ſubject that requires explanation.

418. The man of ſenſe is, in that reſpect, ſubject to a moral impoſſibility.

They both allow, that it is *morally impoſſible* for the man of ſenſe to play the part of a mountebank; but one pretends that the moral impoſſibility is no more than a very great difficulty, and that it is ſometimes compatible with a contrary act: hence it would follow, that a man of ſenſe might, at leaſt ſometimes, though very rarely, act the part of a mountebank publicly, and be ſuppoſed, in fact, to do ſo. The other inſiſts, on the contrary, that the moral impoſſibility is incompatible with a contrary act, as the impoſſibility ariſes from the defect of a motive or cauſe; and a man of ſenſe can have no motive

PART III.

tive to act the part of a mountebank. Whatever may be in theſe difficulties, I think they may be eaſily explained.

419. The man of ſenſe may commit an act of folly, and yet cannot be ſuppoſed to commit it.

The man of ſenſe in queſtion can act the mountebank in public, but he cannot be ſuppoſed to do ſo. Whence ariſes this myſtery, which includes both the power of acting, and the impoſſibility of a ſuppoſition of the act? From this—If we ſuppoſe a man of ſenſe to act in ſuch a manner but for once, the ſuppoſition deſtroys itſelf, and is in itſelf contradictory; for, to ſuppoſe a man of ſenſe to act the part of a mountebank in public, is to ſuppoſe a man of ſenſe a fool, and who muſt, under ſuch a ſuppoſition, ceaſe to have ſenſe.—In this the whole myſtery conſiſts. This impoſſibility therefore, to ſpeak with preciſion, neither ariſes from the moral impoſſibility, which, according to the general opinion of mankind, is no more than a very great difficulty, abſolutely compatible with a contrary act, and even with the ſuppoſition of the contrary act; nor preciſely from a want of motive; as the will, in order to act freely, derives, at leaſt ſometimes, its motive only from itſelf, being ſet in motion by itſelf, and active of itſelf: but the impoſſibility, as may be ſeen, ſolely ariſes from the ſuppoſition that deſtroys itſelf, by uniting at the ſame time, in one perſon, a man of ſenſe, that is, a man who will not act

act fooliſhly, and one who is not a man of ſenſe, or one who will act fooliſhly.

420. He may commit a fooliſh act, as he may, on ſome occaſion, ceaſe to be prudent.

If we do not take the term *man of ſenſe* in the ſtrict meaning of a prudent, wiſe, and diſcreet man, but in the vulgar acceptation, in which we only mean *a man who has hitherto acted conſiſtently, or has behaved ſo in general through life*; in that caſe, there will be no impoſſibility for ſuch a *man of ſenſe* to commit an act of folly; there will be only a very great difficulty: ſo that it will be very poſſible, and we may even ſuppoſe a man of ſenſe capable of committing ſome act of folly; as all ages have furniſhed examples of a ſimilar nature.

It is on this very account, that a *man of ſenſe* or *wiſdom*, conſidered even as to the preciſion of *actual ſenſe* or *wiſdom*, though it be actually impoſſible for him to act fooliſhly, he is nevertheleſs at full liberty to avoid it, notwithſtanding this impoſſibility; for if, by being ſuppoſed actually wiſe and prudent, he cannot be ſuppoſed to commit an act of folly, by which he would ceaſe to be actually wiſe and prudent, he may, at leaſt, ceaſe to be actually wiſe, and be ſuppoſed to commit an act of folly: in ſhort, he exerciſes his liberty in reſolving to be prudent. Now, to reſolve with liberty to be actually prudent, is actually to reſolve with liberty to avoid all folly and extravagance: he is then free in refrain-

PART III. refraining from an act of folly; and yet he cannot commit one, while he is ſuppoſed actually wiſe and prudent, as that would be to ſuppoſe him both wiſe and not wiſe at the ſame time: but this does not at all affect what I have endeavoured to prove here; which is, that free-will, in order to be determined, has no need of any other motive but itſelf, nor of any other act of the underſtanding, but that which preſents to the will what the object is in itſelf to which the will inclines, and which it actually makes a *good*, with reſpect to itſelf, by the very act of inclining to it.

421. Whether the will can incline to evil, conſidering it as ſuch.

From the manner in which this ſubject has been explained, the queſtion agitated in the ſchools muſt appear ſingular: it is, *whether the will can incline to evil, conſidering it as ſuch*; for, as every object to which it inclines is a *good*, with reſpect to it, at the moment the will inclines to it, and that it cannot be an evil, being ſuppoſed a good, it is the ſame thing as aſking, whether the will may incline to an object to which it cannot incline; for the moment the will is conſidered as inclining to it, it is then actually ſuppoſed a *good*, and cannot be ſuppoſed an evil.

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

Whether the human ſoul, or mind, always thinks.

IN order to reſume and conclude what relates to the faculties of the ſoul, it will be neceſſary to ſay a few words with regard to the continuance of its exerciſe in its primary faculty, which is that of thinking. Des Cartes has declared that the ſoul always thinks, and that its eſſence even conſiſts in this actual exerciſe: but it does not appear that he had any invincible teſtimony of the matter.

422. Experience does not inform us whether the ſoul always thinks.

This, in fact, is a point which the experience of every moment of our lives ſhould teſtify and confirm; but it is evident we have no ſuch experience. We cannot recollect what paſſed within us during the time of a profound ſleep, or while we were ſhut up in the womb of our mother. We have it not therefore in our power to convince ourſelves that we exerciſed our thoughts during thoſe times.

423. The impreſſion of the ſenſation of the ſoul on the body is not evidently continual.

Some people ſay, that, as the ſoul is always united to the body, it cannot, at leaſt, be without the ſentiment or perception of this body, and

PART III.

and without the impreſſion of ſenſation which the body makes upon the ſoul, ſince it is in this very thing that our life and the union of our bodies and ſouls appear to conſiſt. But, however plauſible this objection may be, it is not evident that life, and the union of our bodies with our ſouls, conſiſt in this actual impreſſion of ſenſation: it is true we cannot advance a contrary opinion of greater certainty, according to our natural ideas; but neither opinion is ſufficiently certain to oblige us to embrace one ſide or the other; and this ſuſpenſion of the judgement, in matters that are not clear, and with regard to which there is no immediate neceſſity for our being determined, is the beſt method that a judicious mind can poſſibly follow. It is from this conſideration that the preceding chapter is added.

CHAPTER VII.

Of what is naturally unknown to us, with regard to the other properties of the ſoul; and how irrational it is to be determined in any opinion concerning them.

424. We cannot ſpeak of the faculties of the ſoul but from experience.

IT has been already obſerved, that nothing gives a more prejudicial turn to the mind, than to ſuffer it to form determinate opinions on matters of which it has no idea; becauſe we thereby contract a habit of ſeeing things that have no exiſtence but in our imagination, and of taking an obſcure thought for a real truth. This is what has happened to all thoſe who, in attempting to explain the nature of the faculties and operations of the ſoul, have advanced more than is known of thoſe things, either from experience, or from any arguments deduced from experience.

425. Some late philoſopher, have raiſed new difficulties on this ſubject.

It can be of no uſe therefore, as hath been obſerved, to enquire into the nature of the union of the ſoul and body; neither is it of more advantage to inveſtigate what conſtitutes the memory and diſpoſitions of the ſoul: all that ſome late philoſophers have advanced on the ſubject is

PART III.

nothing but the idle ſuggeſtions of wanton imagination. After giving the moſt ingenious and eloquent deſcription of the lines in the brain, that are formed and ſunk deeper by the courſe of the animal ſpirits, and repeated again by a new courſe of the ſpirits in the ſame channel, have they furniſhed us with any real information, or thrown any new light upon theſe matters? They have raiſed a thouſand new difficulties for one that appeared before, and added much greater obſcurity, if poſſible, to what had been already impenetrable: they have done much worſe therefore than the ancient philoſophers did with their terms and *occult qualities*; for the latter, at leaſt, only made uſe of words that conveyed no idea, and, as they were rarely meant to expreſs any thing but matters unintelligible, might therefore be of uſe in bringing men to a ſpeedy deciſion: but Des Cartes and his followers have given us imaginary notions for proofs, and ſuppoſed facts for abſolute certainties; and upon their aſſertions ſome people have endeavoured to realiſe thoſe traces in the brain, and flowings of the animal ſpirits, under the pretext that nothing better had been ſaid: ſomething better however might have been done, and that is, to have ſaid nothing at all about matters of which we can know nothing, and thereby have avoided adding

adding perplexing difficulties to the mortification of conſcious ignorance and incapacity.

426. The traces, or lines in the brain, do not explain the exerciſe of the memory.

How are formed thoſe lines which ſome perſons would fain have to conſtitute the exerciſe of the memory? What ſpace do they occupy to retain ſuch numerous and various ideas? How is it that they are not mutually confounded in their numberleſs interſections? What order do they obſerve, in order to follow each other in ſuch exact ſucceſſion, as may be ſeen in a diſcourſe of ſeveral hours repeated from memory? What relation moreover have theſe lines with the ideas they renew? Is not each of thoſe articles as incomprehenſible in itſelf as even the memory? Why will any one then adduce, as an explanation, what is no leſs impenetrable than the thing explained? That the memory exiſts, we cannot doubt; let us ſeek no further; we can know nothing more on that head: it is the ſame with reſpect to what follows.

427. Imaginary notions of philoſophers with reſpect to the origin of our ideas.

How came we to have ideas, and in what manner are they produced in us? Are they derived from external objects, or from the nature itſelf of the ſoul; or are they, in fine, in us in ſuch a manner as to ariſe likewiſe in part from things diſtinct from us? Let us hear what men of the moſt exalted genius have been led to ſay on this ſubject from the too eager deſire of ſpeaking, without ſufficiently underſtanding what

PART III.

they ſaid; it will be enough to deter us from following their example. Some have imagined that ideas are produced by external objects; that they are *impreſſed ſpecies*, which, by the channel of the ſenſes, are conveyed to the underſtanding; that this conſiders and ſpiritualiſes them; and thence forms an *expreſs ſpecies*, which is the operation itſelf of the mind. What inſtruction can we derive from this explanation? What light does it throw on the ſubject of ideas? The following will prove as little ſatisfactory.

428. The creation of ideas more incomprehenſible than what is attempted to be explained.

It is, that God creates ideas on every occaſion where they are neceſſary for thinking. The explanation is ſhort; *a creation of ideas*: all the inconveniency attending it is, that the nature of our ideas is preciſely what we are looking for; that we are not here told what it is; and that this creation, whatever it may be, is ſtill more above the reach of our underſtanding than even the nature itſelf of our ideas.

429. Having our ideas in God, and ſeeing all in God; an abyſs of difficulties.

Another advances, as a matter very eaſily comprehended, that the ideas of all we ſee are in God; that our mind or ſoul is immediately united to God; ſo that it immediately ſees the ſubſtance of God, which contains all that we know, or can know. I leave it to thoſe who have leiſure and inclination to examine ſcrupulouſly each of the words of this explanation; every one of which, if I am not miſtaken, would furniſh mat-

ter

ter of controverſy ſufficient to fill large volumes. I would aſk whether my idea, which experience makes me feel within me, and which, according to this author, is likewiſe in the ſubſtance of God—whether it be, I ſay, in the ſubſtance of God, and in the ſubſtance of my ſoul, in ſuch a manner as to make theſe two ſubſtances but one; or, if they be two, how is my idea preſent to my mind, when it is in the ſubſtance of God, which is not the ſubſtance of my mind? Again, I aſk, what it is to ſee God immediately; and whether it is to ſee him by an intuitive and beatific viſion? I ſhall not examine in what manner we can ſee God immediately, and yet, in a particular idea, ſee but a part of what is in God; and, as our ideas are limited, how we can find their limits in God, who is boundleſs; or, if our ideas be not limited in God, whom we ſee immediately, how came they to be ſo in what we really ſee. Here is ample matter for arguments which I have no curioſity to inveſtigate: one thing I have long wiſhed to know, and that is, whether the author of thoſe remarks ſeriouſly imagined he had ſaid any thing to illuſtrate the nature of our ideas beyond what had been advanced by others on this ſubject, which was always involved in great obſcurity. CHAP. VII.

When therefore, by way of explaining the nature of ideas, it is ſaid that we ſee our ideas in 450. The explanation more obſcure than the thing to be explained.

PART III.

in God, I would beg to have this explanation explained, and to be informed of what is underſtood by *ſeeing our ideas in God*; for I proteſt before all the philoſophers in the world, that I am, for my own part, more puzzled to conceive how I ſee my ideas in God, than to comprehend the nature and origin itſelf of my ideas. It is in vain to exhort me to reflect within myſelf, to conſider my own nature with cloſer attention, and to conſult the univerſal being: it is, becauſe I have long communed with myſelf on this article, from a long and ſerious meditation on myſelf, and from having long conſulted Reaſon, which is the only univerſal being to conſult upon ſuch an occaſion, that I conclude, from theſe reflections and contemplations, either my adverſary or I muſt be ſomewhat viſionary in our notions; which of us it is, muſt be determined by the general opinion of mankind, as the queſtion is concerning a firſt truth.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VIII.

What can be ſaid, that is intelligible, with reſpect to ideas.

431. In what idea differs from perception.

IF we confine ourſelves to obſervations on ideas that are intelligible, we will ſay they are nothing but mere modifications of the ſoul, inaſmuch as it thinks; they are called *ideas* with reſpect to the object repreſented, and *perception* with regard to the faculty repreſenting: this however does not relate to a *repreſentation* that recalls to the mind any corporeal object. I call *repreſentation* the interior object which the ſoul has preſent to itſelf in each of its perceptions, and by which it intimately and clearly diſtinguiſhes one from the other. It is manifeſt that our ideas, conſidered in this ſenſe, are not more diſtinguiſhed from our underſtanding than motion is from a body moved. The objections made, with regard to the latter explanation, contain nothing that can raiſe a doubt in a rational mind.

432. Ideas differ from the ſoul as a modification does from its ſubſtance.

It will be ſaid, it is the mind that receives the ideas, and they become preſent to it; and therefore it may be aſked whether the faculty

PART III.

that receives be not different from the idea which is received and becomes preſent to it? To this we anſwer, that it differs from it as the ſubſtance does from its modification; for our mind is nothing but the ſubſtance of the ſoul, inaſmuch as it comprehends; and our idea is no more than the modification of our mind, which forms and receives it within itſelf.

433. Objection made by Le Clerc.

Le Clerc advances another objection, which he ſeems to think more important, and which is perhaps leſs ſo. If our ideas, ſays he, were but the perceptions of the ſoul, we ſhould not diſtinguiſh the perception of a ſenſation that is ſolely in us, as pain, which is produced by the prick of a pin, from the perception of an object that is entirely out of us, as the perception of the pin itſelf which is not in us. I do not well comprehend the objection of Mr. Le Clerc, nor what he means by the perception of the pin; the ſoul perceives a ſentiment, or a thought, and not the pin: but, in ſhort, what difficulty is there in conceiving that, among our perceptions, ſome make us ſenſible of what is within us, and others of what is diſtinct from us? Will either one or the other be thereby more or leſs modifications of the ſoul? When Mr. Le Clerc gives a clear anſwer to the compariſon, I ſhall beſtow more time in refuting him; but I foreſee he will ſpare me that trouble.

CHAP-

CHAPTER IX.

Of the origin, duration, and immortality of the ſoul.

PHILOSOPHY, ſtrictly ſpeaking, affords us no lights as to the origin of the ſoul: after exhauſting all its powers and knowledge in the purſuit, it only finds that it cannot perceive any neceſſary connection between a ſpiritual and a material ſubſtance; therefore it cannot diſcern that the ſoul derives any part of its origin from matter or bodily ſubſtance.

434. The ſoul does not derive its origin from the body,

We cannot more clearly ſee how one ſoul ſhould produce another; therefore nothing is more plauſible on the ſubject, than to ſay that our ſouls derive their origin from God: and what we are taught by faith of the matter ſhould not be too haſtily rejected by human reaſon, as the aſſiſtance of faith gives conſiderable ſtrength to the powers of reaſon and the arguments of philoſophy.

435. nor from another ſoul.

And indeed, if we mean to ſpeak with candour, what invincible anſwer, without the light of faith, could be given to an obſtinate and vain man, who, becauſe there is a relation between the

436. The incomprehenſible relation betwen the ſoul and the body.

PART III.

the ſoul and the body in their operations, though it be incomprehenſible to us, ſhould therefore maintain that it is not impoſſible but there may be a relation as to ſubſtance between them, though we may not conceive any ſuch thing? I anſwer, that I admit the firſt, becauſe experience convinces me of it; and that I have a right not to allow the ſecond, of which I have no experience: but he may quickly reply, that the queſtion does not relate to a matter of fact, but to a poſſibility, or at leaſt a non-impoſſibility; and, as experience convinces me of the non-impoſſibility of the relation between the operations of the body and ſoul, which I do not comprehend, it ſhould likewiſe reſtrain me from pronouncing with regard to the impoſſibility of the relation, as to ſubſtance, which God might have formed between the ſoul and body: but, notwithſtanding theſe arguments, moral proofs on the occaſion ſupply the place of phyſical evidence, in ſuch a manner as to carry conviction, with reſpect to the ſpirituality and immortality of the ſoul, which are privileges that have an intimate relation with each other.

437. We ſee no principle of deſtruction in the ſoul.

Phyſical proofs of the immortality of the ſoul are deduced from this conſideration, that, with all our powers of knowledge and reaſon, we can diſcover no ſubject or principle of deſtruction in it: for, in ſhort, we know of no deſtruction but what

what is occaſioned by a change or ſeparation in the parts of a whole: now we not only do not diſcern any parts in the ſoul; but farther, we poſitively ſee that it is a ſubſtance perfectly one, which has no parts.

438. Bodies have no unity, nor ſimplicity,

We have obſerved, in ſpeaking of unity, that it is a quality not ſtrictly applicable to a body; that whatever is body is not ſaid to be *one*, but in an arbitrary reſpect; and it is in ſuch a manner one, that, at bottom, it is no more than a collection of ſeveral unities, each of which cannot properly be called *one*. Let us take a watch, for example: we cannot ſee any thing in the body that has more unity; for, if the leaſt of its parts happens to be wanting, it is no longer a watch, properly ſpeaking: yet what is this unity, but a collection of diſtinct things and parts? Touch the pendulum, and you do not touch the wheel: had they ſentiment, or feeling, the pendulum might be ſenſible of pain, or be unhappy, whilſt the wheel ſhould enjoy pleaſure, and be happy, without either feeling what the other did.

439. as a mind has.

It is not the ſame with regard to the ſoul, which is ſo far *one* that I cannot make impreſſions on what I might imagine to be one of its parts, without making impreſſion on what I ſhould fancy to be another part of its ſubſtance; or, to ſpeak more juſtly, an impreſſion cannot be made on its ſubſtance, without being made on the whole

of

PART III. of its ſubſtance. I ſee a pleaſing proſpect, and hear a fine concert: theſe two ſentiments cannot be ſuppoſed to reſide in two parts of the ſoul: they muſt be equally in the whole ſoul; for, were we to ſuppoſe two parts in it, one would not be the other; and the part that ſhould hear the concert, would have no ſenſation of the pleaſure of the proſpect; for one, in not being the other, would not be ſuſceptible of the properties of the other, as has been obſerved with reſpect to a watch: I may impreſs a colour on the wheels, that ſhall not affect the pendulum. In the ſoul, on the contrary, one part muſt neceſſarily be the other; and, to ſpeak more properly, the ſoul muſt have no parts; for, while we ſuppoſe parts in it, whatever makes impreſſion on one part of the ſoul, neceſſarily makes impreſſion on the whole ſoul together.

440. Nothing paſſes in the ſoul without affecting the whole of what it is.

The ſoul is ſo ſenſible of this, that it judges of, and compares all that paſſes within it, when it experiences different ſentiments. In order to judge, therefore, that one is painful, and the other agreeable, a ſubſtance that is ſingle, and without parts, muſt feel both: were there two parts, one would judge of what it ſhould feel on one ſide, and the other of what it might particularly experience on the other ſide. It might be compared to a piece of timber, one end of which might be burned, and the other not in the leaſt injured

injured by fire: it would be, as it were, two ſouls, one of which might feel joy without the other having any ſhare in it, and without either of them having the power to form a compariſon or judgement with reſpect to two different ſentiments. It is this compariſon, and this judgement, formed by the ſoul, which demonſtrate it to be *one* and *ſimple*, without parts and compoſition. Now compoſition and parts being the only cauſe of deſtruction we know, as hath been already obſerved, and as it is univerſally allowed, we do not conſequently ſee any principle of deſtruction in ſouls; and we have no room to judge that they are liable to periſh, or be deſtroyed.

441. What we know of the ſoul ſhows it to be immortal.

But might they not have a principle of deſtruction unknown to us, as they have a principle of formation of which we are entirely ignorant? Cannot God himſelf, their firſt author, annihilate them? May he not have formed them to return to the ſame nothing whence he had drawn them? This is the utmoſt extent to which the arguments of preſumption and libertiniſm can be carried. We ſhall not heſitate to acknowledge, that faith, with reſpect to the immortality of the ſoul, gives us much more poſitive aſſurances than human reaſon is capable of ſuggeſting; but, if we confine ourſelves to reaſon alone, we ſtill have far the advantage of our opponents. What they alledge is true, that we are not acquainted with all

PART III.

all the internal nature of the ſoul: but what we do not know, is, with reſpect to our reaſon, as if it had no exiſtence; nor can we thence draw any concluſion: it is from what we do know, that conſequences are to be drawn. Now we evidently know, that the ſoul ſhows no principle of what we call deſtruction; and we evidently know, therefore, that it is unreaſonable to judge it mortal. But might not God annihilate it? Undoubtedly he might: this is what every body muſt allow; but it is not the affair in queſtion: it is, whether he actually deſtined it to be reduced hereafter to nothing, as he has thence formed it? This, as hath been obſerved, is a conjecture that we cannot rationally liſten to, if we examine the phyſical proofs alone that are deduced from the nature and conſtitution of the ſoul; but the ſuſpicion will entirely vaniſh, if we take the trouble to compare it with the natural diſpoſition of the mind and heart of man; and here moral proofs may be very properly introduced.

442. Deſire, a moral proof of our immortality.

The deſire of being happy is what we find moſt deeply rooted in the heart, and moſt ſtrongly interwoven with the whole nature of man. The author of Nature himſelf, therefore, has imprinted in us this deſire, and all that is united with it, to give us a reliſh for virtue, which leads us to eſteem the diſpoſition of being regular in ourſelves, and benevolent with regard to others.

Is

Is it probable that God, infinite in wiſdom and goodneſs as he is, could have formed us for an end which we ſhould never reach? Such an idea is incomprehenſible: it is however certain, that we do not in this life attain to perfect happineſs, to which we are continually aſpiring; and, were our ſouls to be mortal, and periſh with our bodies, we could never attain it.

443. As it is placed in us by providence.

Beſides, the means which we evidently conceive to have an eſſential relation to happineſs, ſuch as wiſdom, virtue, equity, and goodneſs, would have but an equivocal and falſe relation to that happineſs to which we feel ourſelves deſtined, as God often permits thoſe virtues to be oppoſed, mortified, and deſpiſed, in this life. Again, though they ſhould meet with every advantage in this world, I ſtill find in me a deſire of extending my exiſtence beyond this mortal life: this deſire is ſo conformable to reaſon, that it never is extinguiſhed, unleſs by a kind of intoxication and ſtupefaction of our rational faculties. If my ſoul be then mortal, the moſt rational deſire I have will never be accompliſhed: now this deſire is imprinted on my heart by the author of my exiſtence, who thereby indicates my future deſtiny: God would therefore have placed in me a deſire, that muſt only tend to give me pain and regret; he would have placed in me a falſe indication of my deſtiny, and deceived me in the

moſt

PART III. moſt eſſential article of my life; which is inconſiſtent with the truth, wiſdom, and purity, of God. We cannot therefore conceive the exiſtence of a good and wiſe God, who is our author, without conceiving at the ſame time that our ſouls muſt exiſt after this life, in order to arrive at that happineſs with the deſire of which he has inſpired us; for it is certain we do not fully poſſeſs it in this life, even by wiſdom and virtue, that ſhould lead us to it. In a word, if the ſoul were mortal, God would not have acted with the wiſdom and equity that are eſſential to his nature, and without which God would not be what he really is: the exiſtence of God, therefore, is a proof of the duration of our ſouls after this life.

Let us here take a ſhort view of thoſe invincible proofs that may be adduced of the exiſtence of the firſt being: this is an article eſſential to our ſubject, as it is thence we are to be furniſhed with the knowledge of all that our ſouls, and all ſpiritual beings poſſible, are in their firſt and true ſource, which is the ſupreme and eternal being.

CHAPTER X.

Of the firſt principle of our ſoul, of all that God is, and of his exiſtence.

444. The order of the world, a proof of the exiſtence of God.

WE have ſhewn (N°. 288) that wherever order is diſcovered, there alſo muſt be found ſome intelligence who is the author of it. Now there is order, ſuch as might be different from what it is, in the general ſtructure of the univerſe, and in that particular formation we call the nature of man. There is then an intelligence that is the cauſe of this order: this intelligent cauſe, ſuperior to the whole univerſe, and to every man, and who made them what they are, is what I call *God*. A God therefore exiſts.

If this proof, ſimple as it is, be not admitted, I do not think it worth while to reaſon on the preſent ſubject; for, in ſhort, in order to reaſon, we muſt neceſſarily have a firſt principle, that is, a propoſition allowed to be indiſputable, and that is, as has been remarked (N°. 39) ſo clear, that it can neither be attacked nor proved by any propoſition of greater perſpicuity. Now there is not one that more fully poſſeſſes this character than the following principle; *all that I ſee, in*

PART III.

which is found order, and a permanent, uniform, and conſtant order, muſt have an intelligence for its cauſe: for, between a man who ſhould judge a watch, that regularly marks the hours, might have exiſted of itſelf, and another who denies that two and two make four, I ſee no difference as to their abſurdity and extravagance; nor do I imagine that any perſon can ſeriouſly find a diſtinction.

445. The laws of motion depend on God.

If it be pretended that, as the laws of motion are neceſſary in nature, the order that actually ſubſiſts muſt have thence neceſſarily enſued; in anſwer to this, I ſay, that the actual laws of motion in nature are not neceſſarily produced but by the will of an intelligent cauſe; for, without this, as matter is in itſelf indifferent to all degrees and directions of motion, how could it have been determined to any motion?

446. The author of the perfections of the world poſſeſſes them within himſelf.

Again, if the univerſe in general, and man in particular, have a ſuperior intelligence for their author; as the order found in them is equally admirable, eſtimable, good, and uſeful, their author muſt have ſomething in him more admirable, eſtimable, and ſuperior to them; for an artificer is always to be eſteemed ſuperior to his work, and a cauſe to its effects: Now, as the work and effect ſurpaſs all that we conceive moſt eſtimable, admirable, and beſt, he who is the maker and cauſe, is of conſequence incomparably more ſo, and is found from his nature ſuperior

rior to that we can conceive or expreſs of him. This is the idea we have when we call God an *infinite being*; that is, we do not perceive the extent of his attributes, nor can we even conjecture any method of diſcovering them. CHAP. X.

447. We cannot ſee any bounds in him.

This cauſe of all things being alſo the firſt of which we have a knowledge, we can neither aſcertain, determine, nor even ſuſpect its limits by any rule: we manifeſtly ſee that it has more perfections to conciliate our eſteem, our admiration, and love, than all that we know or can know; but beyond that, how far this cauſe extends in virtue, efficacy, and merit, is what we can no way determine; and ſhould we attempt to fix any particular degree or meaſure to it, in preference to others, it is evident that it muſt be from mere fancy and idle conjecture: it is therefore from the ſuggeſtions of Reaſon that we admit no bounds to it. But who has informed us that there are not ſeveral cauſes of what we ſee in the univerſe in general, and in man in particular? Who has told us, if they have but one cauſe, that this itſelf has not another cauſe, the latter a third, the third a fourth, and ſo on *ad infinitum?*

448. We cannot ſuſpect the world to have ſeveral cauſes, or authors,

To ſuſpect ſeveral cauſes of the univerſe, muſt proceed from the fanciful notions already mentioned, that are manifeſtly contrary to reaſon; and would be to admit what is more difficult to

PART III.

conceive, and reject what is leſs ſo. A whole, ſuch as the univerſe, of which man forms a part, and of which the parts moſt deſerving our attention have ſo aſtoniſhing a relation with each other, may, and muſt more eaſily, proceed from one intelligence only than from many, who could never combine their deſigns ſo perfectly as one can regulate and combine his. And indeed it cannot enter the mind to imagine ſeveral different cauſes of the univerſe, without ſuppoſing them ſubordinate to one another; to do which is, to protract, or augment, inſtead of ſolving the difficulty.

449. though they ſhould even be ſubordinate cauſes.

For, in ſhort, thoſe ſubordinate cauſes will either have a firſt cauſe, or not: if they have one, it is that we are in ſearch of, and what muſt be the principle of all that exiſts: if they have no principle, they do not exiſt; for, being all ſubordinate cauſes, they cannot exiſt but by ſubordination to ſome firſt principle, otherwiſe ſome one of them would no longer be ſubordinate, which is contrary to the ſuppoſition.

But, by admitting an infinity of cauſes, each effect, it is ſaid, would always have a prior cauſe, and no cauſe could be adduced but what muſt have one anterior. To talk after this manner, is to make uſe of words without ſaying any thing that the mind conceives, or whence any idea can be formed.

And

And indeed, in the infinite ſucceſſion of all thoſe cauſes that have hitherto exiſted, not one would exiſt of itſelf, and conſequently none at all would exiſt; for they would neither have within themſelves, nor externally, any principle to determine their exiſtence. They would have none internally, as none of them have a principle of exiſtence in themſelves; nor would they have any externally, as nothing remains independent of ſuch an infinite ſucceſſion. If it be ſaid that each cauſe would exiſt by its anterior cauſe, this is directly throwing the ſame difficulty on that anterior cauſe: for I would aſk, who or what has determined the anterior cauſe to exiſt? Now, removing from cauſe to cauſe, inſtead of eluding the difficulty, would only ſerve to protract it by an imaginary infinity, in which we always find an effect without a cauſe, and a determination without a determining principle; ſo that I am as much at a loſs to conceive who or what has determined the anterior, as the poſterior cauſe. Thus, upon ſeeing the end of a chain ſuſpended, the top of which ſhould be entirely out of ſight, were I to be aſked what cauſe ſuſpended this chain, and I ſhould anſwer, the cauſe is, that all the links mutually depend on each other; my reply would excite laughter, and juſtly, as the difficulty would ſtill be the ſame, and it might be aſked, on what

450. In an infinity of ſubordinate cauſes none will exiſt.

PART III.

depends the infinite length of the chain compoſed of all the links, not one of which is ſuſpended by itſelf? This chain, infinite as it might be, would ſtill be no more than a collection of links, not one of which can remain ſuſpended of itſelf. The ſucceſſion of links could not therefore remain ſuſpended, unleſs by the help of ſome external cauſe, and there is no ſuch external cauſe; for, if the links hang upon one another, and their infinite ſucceſſion depends upon nothing, that is ſaying, they hang, and do not hang; that they are ſuſpended, according to the ſuppoſition, but not really ſo, as the infinite ſucceſſion of links is not itſelf ſuſpended.

451. An eternal being muſt be admitted.

When we therefore refer the principle of the univerſe to an infinite chain of cauſes, we admit an infinite ſeries of things incomprehenſible and contradictory. It is then true, that the eternity of a Firſt Being, which is infinity with regard to duration, cannot be fully comprehended in all reſpects; but all may and ſhould comprehend that there has exiſted ſome being from eternity. If we really ſuppoſe no eternity, this ſuppoſition will be ſtill more incomprehenſible. A being muſt have commenced without any principle of exiſtence, either in itſelf or externally; and this would be a firſt effect without a cauſe. It is then the nature of man to be obliged by his reaſon to admit the exiſtence of ſomething he does

does not comprehend; he clearly conceives the neceſſity of this external exiſtence; but he neither comprehends the nature of this being exiſting eternally, nor the nature of his eternity: he comprehends that *ſuch a thing is*, and not what it is. CHAP. X.

This laſt reflection is a full ſolution of a number of ridiculous difficulties with which the human mind perplexes itſelf: its nature is, to know the exiſtence of certain things, without being acquainted with their properties; and would it renounce the knowledge of the exiſtence, becauſe it is incapable of knowing its properties? This is the ſame thing as if a perſon ſhould refuſe to be convinced that he remembers and thinks, becauſe he cannot explain to his ſatisfaction in what manner he remembers and thinks. The *manner* eludes our reſearches; let us give it up: we ſuffer ourſelves to be perplexed with this, becauſe we have no idea of it: and yet this very circumſtance ſhould free our minds from all perplexity; for any particular matter, of which we have no idea, is, and ought to be, with reſpect to our reaſon and arguments, as if it did not really exiſt: now, what does not exiſt, we have no right to judge of, nor to form thence any concluſions contrary to thoſe things we know to exiſt. A deficiency of knowledge, or a thing unknown, never deſtroys nor makes any altera-

PART III.

tion in real knowledge, or a thing known. We know not in what manner the Firſt Being exiſts; we nevertheleſs know that he does exiſt: we do not comprehend the meaſure of his eternity; we however conceive its reality and neceſſity: we do not conceive in what manner he has produced all things; but we very well conceive that he muſt have produced them: in fine, we have not an idea of all that the Supreme Author of our underſtanding, and of the whole univerſe, is in himſelf; but we have a very clear idea that it is impoſſible but he muſt poſſeſs, in a ſuperlative degree, both intelligence, and all the qualities that deſerve our admiration, eſteem, and love, in all that he is.

452. God is not incomprehenſible to us in all things.

It is therefore a duty eſſential in metaphyſics, to clearly explain what is advanced when mention is made of an incomprehenſible object, ſuch as God; for he is not, in fact, incomprehenſible in all things, with regard to us: if that were the caſe, we ſhould have no idea of him, and have nothing to ſay of him; but we may and ought to affirm of God, that he exiſts, that he has underſtanding, wiſdom, power, and ſtrength, as he hath communicated part of thoſe qualities to his works; and we ſhould alſo aſſert, that he poſſeſſes theſe attributes in a degree ſuperior to our higheſt conceptions: 1ſt, Becauſe he has them from his nature and the neceſſity of his being, and

and neither borrowed nor communicated. 2dly, As having them all together, and united in one ſimple and indiviſible being, and not in parts, nor diſperſed, as they are in creatures. 3dly, In fine, becauſe he has them as it were in their ſource; and we, on the contrary, have them in ſmall ſtreams, and like drops flowing from his infinite, eternal, and ineffable being. But as, between this ſupreme and univerſal intelligence, which is the cauſe of all things, and the limited and particular intelligence we call *our ſoul*, the diſtance muſt be immenſe, is there not ſome other intelligence of a middle nature? This is an opinion taught by faith, and readily admitted by philoſophy. It will not be improper to enquire a little more particularly into *the ſuggeſtions of reaſon alone on this matter:* it ſhall therefore form the ſubject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER XI.

Of middle intelligences between God and the human ſoul, or of pure ſpiritual beings.

453. What is meant by ſpiritual beings.

WE ſhould be firſt agreed as to the idea we affix to the terms *middle intelligences*, or rather to the word *ſpirits*, which is more convenient, as being ſhorter. I underſtand thereby ſpiritual ſubſtances, that is, ſuch as are capable of thinking and deſiring, without being attached to bodies like ours.

454. There is no neceſſary connection between the ſoul and the body.

I ſay to bodies ſuch as ours, in order to ſhew that we may conceive intelligences without any body, or with bodies different from ours; for, in ſhort, as we can perceive no neceſſary connexion between the ſubſtance of our ſouls and the ſubſtance of our bodies, we may alſo judge that a ſpiritual ſubſtance might exiſt without any body; but perceiving, on the other hand, from experience, that our ſouls are united to our bodies, there appears no difficulty in ſuppoſing a mind of ſuperior intelligence to be attached to a body in the ſame proportion as our bodies are to our ſouls.

In

In this reſpect, I ſay, we ſee no difficulty in admitting *ſpirits*, or *a middle order of intelligences*; and ſo we learn from Revelation, that there are ſpirits called *angels*, or *demons:* but we have nothing to do with Revelation at preſent; the queſtion relates only to the mere light of Nature, and to know, ſuppoſing Reaſon to ſubſiſt without Revelation, whether we ſhould admit *ſpirits*. All the anſwer I can give is, to confeſs my ignorance of the matter. We might admit them, it is true; but ſhould we be obliged to admit them? No: but Plato, it will be ſaid, by the mere light of Nature, thought himſelf obliged to admit them. There is ſome reaſon to conjecture that he might have formed that opinion, as well as ſeveral others, from the confuſed knowledge he had of the myſteries of the people of God, through his intercourſe with the Egyptians, among whom the Iſraelites had reſided above two hundred years, and to whom they had communicated many ideas which the human mind could not have probably acquired by the light of Nature alone. I know, however, that Plato has founded his opinion on a particular argument; but it does not appear to me ſufficiently convincing to be reliſhed by every body. It is as follows:

455. Reaſon alone would not invincibly prove the exiſtence of pure ſpirits.

We ſee ſubſtances that are mere bodies; we ſee ſubſtances, ſuch as thoſe of men, which are at the ſame time ſpirits and bodies: there muſt be there-

456. The reaſoning of Plato on this ſubject, not ſufficiently convincing.

PART III.

therefore ſubſtances that are pure ſpirits. If I deny the conſequence, how will Plato, or his followers, be able to prove it? This muſt be enquired into: in the mean time, I conſider the conſequence as not proved, as I cannot of myſelf diſcern how it ſhould be.

457. Experience is not more ſatisfactory as to this matter.

We do not perceive that experience, the chief guide of human reaſon, could have ever obliged us to admit ſpirits of a middle nature; yet it is experience itſelf that is quoted with regard to many facts that are aſſerted. Ghoſts and apparitions, predictions of ſoothſayers, anſwers of oracles, and miracles wrought by magicians, are, at different times, appealed to; but in all theſe nothing is invincibly ſhewn but marvellous events, and not ſubſtances of a middle nature between God and Man. Theſe effects therefore might be attributed, either to impoſture, to extraordinary powers of Nature, or, more rationally ſtill, to the Author himſelf of Nature, if the particular miracle in queſtion is a good, or tends to good; ſo that we are not thence obliged to admit a middle order of ſpirits. Now, even when Revelation expreſsly informs us of the exiſtence and operation of good and evil ſpirits, although we cannot deny ſome of their effects, it is however certain that the ſeduction in this reſpect is ſometimes very great. Beſides, with all the attention I have employed, in order to con-

convince myſelf of what I could ſee or hear relative to the matter, I think I have never ſeen or heard any thing that ſhould engage a mind, rationally ſcrupulous, to judge, from the mere lights of nature, and independently of revealed facts, that any ſpirit, or middle intelligence, has been clearly manifeſted.

458. We know nothing of the particulars of the nature and operations of ſpirits.

What are we then to ſay of the particulars of their nature and operations? What are we to judge of their manner of thinking, acting, deſiring, ſpeaking, and moving from one place to another? Nothing at all, as we know nothing of thoſe things; but many treatiſes, many curious, profound, and learned books, have been compoſed on theſe matters: thoſe writings and books may communicate things that are true, by relating all that we learn from faith on the ſubject; but as for the reſt, that religion does not teach, thoſe who ſay more of the matter than we, are not therefore better informed.

It may perhaps be aſked, whether it is worth while to write a treatiſe on ſpiritual beings, when it aſcertains nothing with regard to the moſt ſublime and extenſive ſubjects of common metaphyſics? I ſay, in anſwer, that it is learning a great deal, to ſee diſtinctly we can acquire no knowledge of certain matters; and that all we might have learned of them may, or ought to be

PART III. be forgotten, as incapable of giving ſatisfaction to a rational mind.

It is perhaps the moſt ſolid fruit of metaphyſical knowledge, to make us fully ſenſible of the limits of our underſtanding, and of the vanity of ſo many ancient and modern philoſophers, who have thought it better to uſe a language that is incomprehenſible, than to repreſs the ridiculous ambition, and the dangerous vanity, of ſaying things that neither are, nor can be, underſtood by any perſon. For my own part, it has been my conſtant aim, throughout this whole treatiſe, to explain firſt truths, and the ſources or principles of our opinions, in the cleareſt manner poſſible, in order to make them intelligible to the human mind. I have in every part endeavoured to avoid, or lay open the errors, into which the inferior ranks of men, and the ignorant, are apt to fall, for want of thinking; and many philoſophers, by giving into the contrary extreme, and thinking too much. With this view I have been careful to admit, as notions, none but clear and preciſe ideas; and to acknowledge no principles, but the judgements adopted by common ſenſe. I ſhall be guided by the ſame rule in the proſecution of what remains to be explained in the ſubſequent part of this treatiſe.

PART

PART IV

First Truths that relate to Corporeal Beings.

[*The firſt truths we can diſcover with regard to corporeal beings, relate either to what they appear to us to have in common with one another, or what they ſeem to have peculiar to themſelves. The firſt is what we generally call the* MATTER OF BODIES; *the other is what is termed the* FORM OF BODIES. *They ſhall be made the ſubject of two diſtinct chapters.*]

CHAPTER I.

Of the matter of bodies.

459. Matter is not what is common to many things.

MANY define matter to be, *what is common to each thing with another*; and form, *what is peculiar in each thing, and diſtinguiſhes it from every other thing*. I ſhould make no ſcruple of admitting theſe notions; but, in admitting them, I muſt alſo ſay, what will not be heard perhaps without ſome repugnance, that, even with reſpect to ſpiritual beings, there are both *matter* and *form*, as they have ſomething in common, viz. *intelligence*, and ſomething peculiar, that is, *what conſtitutes each of them ſuch a ſpiritual being, and not another*.

460. What is ſimilar in different beings is not common to them.

If it be pretended that what is ſaid to be common to ſpiritual beings, is no more, properly ſpeaking, than a *reſemblance*, I have no objection; but what is ſaid to be common to different bodies is nothing but a reſemblance alſo. No part of what a particular being really is, forms a part of another being; otherwiſe a being muſt be,

PART IV.

at the ſame time, two beings; which is a thing incomprehenſible.

461. A ſubſtance ſucceſſively becomes ſeveral bodies.

But what was *wheat*, is it not now *bread*; and will it not be to-morrow *blood*, and the day after *fleſh?* And, in theſe four ſubſtances, is there not ſomething common; ſo that what was the ſubſtance of one becomes, at leaſt in part, the ſubſtance of the other? Yes, doubtleſs there is ſomething common between theſe four ſubſtances; but what is found common is the ſame ſubſtance, which takes different names on account of its different modifications. We however find nothing actually common in different bodies, one of which is *wheat*, another *bread*, the third *blood*, and the fourth *fleſh*. It ſeems then that matter ſhould be defined, not *what is common to different bodies*, but *a ſubſtance that may ſucceſſively become ſeveral different bodies*.

462. It cannot become ſeveral ſpiritual beings.

By this definition, the idea of *matter* will be neceſſarily found to exclude ſpiritual beings; for we have no idea that a ſpiritual being can ever become, by the help of any modifications, either totally, or even in part, the ſubſtance of another ſpiritual being; whereas we have a very diſtinct idea, that a determinate portion of matter, which at this moment actually conſtitutes a particular body, may, by alterations of motion and figure, eaſily become a quite different body, as we ſee in the example already quoted of *wheat*,

that

that becomes *flour*, from flour *bread*, from bread *blood*, and from blood *fleſh*; for we know, without a poſſibility of a doubt, that ſome part of the ſubſtance of the firſt paſſed ſucceſſively to all the reſt; and it is this ſubſtance we call *matter*.

463. To be moveable, impenetrable, and capable of extenſion, are qualities of bodies;

In the ſubſtance common to different bodies that ſucceed each other, we perceive certain qualities, or modifications; ſuch as, firſt, to be capable of motion; ſecondly, incapable of being naturally in the ſame place, or ſpace, that is occupied by another body; and, thirdly, capable of occupying, in particular, and neceſſarily, a certain portion of ſpace or extent. Theſe three qualities are what we term, firſt, its *mobility*; ſecondly, its *impenetrability*; and, thirdly, its *quantity*.

464. are inſeparable from them, as they occur ſeparately to our mind.

All theſe things, or rather theſe qualities, are naturally, and according to the repreſentation of our natural ideas, really inſeparable from matter itſelf: as they however form objects of ſo many particular ideas, they may be conſidered one without the other; our minds having the faculty of attaching themſelves to one of thoſe ideas only, without conſidering another, and that by the help of abſtraction, or abſtracted ideas. We muſt, however, be extremely cautious of judging things to be really, and in themſelves, ſuch as we repreſent them to our imagination by abſtractions; ſo as to judge abſolutely inſeparable, or ſepara-

PART IV.

ble, in the ſubſtance, whatever we unite with, or ſeparate from it, by the operation of our minds.

465. The redneſs in a burning coal does not conſtitute its ſubſtance.

If a ſavage, for example, had never ſeen any but burning coals, and he had no idea of an extinguiſhed coal, he would not conceive that a coal could remain what it is, in ceaſing to be red, and becoming black; nevertheleſs he would be manifeſtly miſtaken.

If, on the other hand, from ſeeing nothing more conſpicuous and ſtriking in the burning coal than the flaming colour, he ſhould take it into his head that the eſſence of the coal ſolely conſiſted in being red, he would be ſtill more groſsly deceived; for it is as much the eſſence of the coal to be capable of becoming black, as to be actually red. It is true, according to the thought of the ſavage, the coal, in ceaſing to be red, would ceaſe to be what it was before: but it is in this very particular that he would be miſtaken; for the coal would only loſe one of its modifications, without loſing its real ſubſtance. Let us apply this to the ſubject, in order to know the eſſence of matter.

466. We have no experience of a body without quantity.

From never having ſeen, or had a ſenſation, or even any idea, of matter without quantity, if we ſhould thence pretend to conclude, that the eſſence of matter is quantity, it would be like concluding that the eſſence of a burning coal conſiſts in redneſs. We may indeed ſay, according

cording to the preſent ſtate of things, and the idea we and all men have been able to acquire naturally, by means of ſenſation and experience, that we do not conceive it poſſible for matter to be without quantity; but we neither can, nor ought to conclude, that it is abſolutely impoſſible for its ſubſtance to exiſt without it.

467. Quantity is not more the eſſence of bodies than mobility.

Again, as he who ſhould ſee a burning coal, would be in the wrong to take its redneſs for its preciſe and total eſſence, as there are other qualities united with it as well as redneſs; for example, its ſuſceptibility of inflammation, or extinction; ſo it would be likewiſe unreaſonable, with reſpect to matter, to take one of its qualities for its preciſe and total eſſence, in preference to other qualities that are equally united with it; and to ſay that matter conſiſts in its *mobility* rather than in its *quantity*, or in its *quantity* rather than in its *impenetrability* or *mollity:* for, in fact, it is advancing nothing, to pretend that the two laſt qualities are conſequences of quantity. Another may alledge, that quantity is no more than a conſequence of one of the two others: and neither of theſe two pretenſions will be better founded, or more rational, than the other; for experience teaches us, that each of theſe three qualities forms three ideas in our minds, and that we can think of one without thinking of the two others; conſequently,

PART IV.

ſequently, that they are independent of each other in our minds.

468. They are not inſeparable, but according to the order of nature.

That one is inſeparable from the other in reality, and in their internal nature, we find to be conformable to natural order; but to know whether abſolutely, and in a ſupernatural way, they may not be ſeparable, is what neither our ſenſes, ideas, nor minds, can reach; and, when we pronounce them inſeparable, it ſhould be underſtood according to the *order* of *nature*, of which alone we have experience and knowledge.

469. We know not the internal eſſence of matter.

Not only it is not rational, to aſſert that one of theſe three qualities is the eſſence of matter, preferably to the others; but it is equally wrong to ſay, that any of the three, or even the three together, are its effective and real eſſence. I ſay *effective* and *real*; for it may indeed be its *metaphyſical* and *repreſented* eſſence, that is, what our minds and ideas repreſent to us as moſt conſpicuous and ſtriking in what we call *matter* or *body*. But, beſides what is repreſented to us by our minds, there may be many other things that our minds do not repreſent, not having even an idea of them, which can be obtained only by our ſenſes. Now experience daily ſhews us, in external objects, an infinite variety of diſpoſitions that eſcape the ſagacity and penetration of our ſenſes; and theſe particularly conſtitute the internal ſubſtance and the effective nature of each thing,

thing, which are very different from the ſimple qualities that make impreſſion on our ſenſes. If it be pretended, that, to make the eſſence of matter conſiſt in quantity, is a primitive idea which nature has placed in us, independently of all experience and argument; it is this very *pretenſion* that is diſputed, and that is conſidered no leſs frivolous by ſome, than it is deliberately admitted by others.

But to return to the example already adduced: the *burning coal*, conſidered as ſuch, is evidently *red*; and it is equally evident that this redneſs is not the eſſence itſelf of the coal: it is a quality that reſides in it; but it is not the ſubject and the nature itſelf of the ſubſtance in which it reſides.

470. The diſpoſition of a thing ſuppoſes the thing itſelf.

In order to be convinced of this, let us conſider what is in itſelf this quality of redneſs in the coal; I ſay, in the coal, for I do not ſpeak of this quality as producing in me a particular ſenſation by the organ of one of my ſenſes. What is then the quality of redneſs in the coal? It is a modification of the ſubſtance of the coal, diſpoſed in ſuch manner as to reflect the rays of light, in a determinate quantity, calculated to produce in me a ſenſation of a red colour: it is therefore a diſpoſition of the thing, but not the thing itſelf; or, if you will, it is the thing itſelf conſidered with reſpect to one of its parts or diſ-

PART IV.

poſitions; but this diſpoſition ſuppoſes the thing itſelf that is diſpoſed. The diſpoſition and particular contexture which conſtitute what we call *cloth*, conſidered abſolutely as diſpoſition, is not the ſubſtance itſelf of the cloth: this ſubſtance, in fact, is independent of ſuch diſpoſition, as it might be, and was, without that diſpoſition, when the cloth was no more than wool. In fine, the qualities of a particular being are not the ſubſtance itſelf of that being, nor its real and internal nature, becauſe thoſe qualities are only what is perceptible in the being, with reſpect to us; and its ſubſtance moreover contains ſeveral internal diſpoſitions, which we cannot know, becauſe they are imperceptible to our ſenſes; but they are, on that account, the more eſſential to it, as they more particularly conſtitute the internal nature of its ſubſtance.

471. Extenſion is not the eſſence of matter.

The three foregoing reflections furniſh three arguments to ſhew the little foundation there is for the opinion of thoſe who conſider extenſion as the eſſence of matter: they have been looked upon as men of the greateſt ſagacity; yet, with all their penetration, they did not perceive that on this occaſion they took, 1ſt. A part of what they diſcerned in matter for the whole of its internal nature; 2dly, A particular quality of matter for all its other qualities; 3dly, Abſtracted ideas of matter for its real nature. Matter is a thing

thing extenſive, as ſnow is a thing white; but neither whiteneſs conſtitutes the nature of ſnow, nor extenſion the eſſence of matter.

In reflecting on ſo glaring an error, we cannot but wonder how it came to be ſo firmly eſtabliſhed, and ſo widely diffuſed. This was probably occaſioned by the circumſtance following.

472. In refuting one falſe notion, others are eſtabliſhed that are not more true.

When Des Cartes made his appearance, Philoſophy, in a multiplicity of pompous words, ſaid many things that were not very intelligible: this he and his followers eaſily and ſucceſsfully demonſtrated. People therefore concluded, that, as they were right with reſpect to what they refuted, they muſt have been equally ſo in what they eſtabliſhed; and hence proceeded the miſtake. They threw a ridicule on ancient philoſophy, which laid down abſtractions inſtead of realities: the followers of Des Cartes ſubſtituted other abſtractions, which are not greater realities.

473. What we are to judge of matter.

But to return to the ſubject: What are we then to think with reſpect to matter? I anſwer in three words—1ſt, Its internal and natural eſſence is unknown to us; it is beyond the reach of our ſenſes. 2dly, Its moſt ſtriking qualities are impenetrability, mobility, and quantity. 3dly, Its moſt diſtinguiſhed nature, and what may be looked upon as its metaphyſical and repreſented eſſence, is the capacity it has of becoming

PART IV.

ming ſucceſſively different ſorts of bodies, and perhaps every ſpecies of body, according to the different forms of which it is ſuſceptible.

474. It is not certain that any matter may become every ſpecies of body.

The *perhaps* added above is not a thing ſo indifferent as many perſons imagine, in ſuppoſing, as they do, that every particle of matter, by means of the difference of motion and figure, may naturally become all kinds of bodies. I confeſs that the probability is on their ſide; but evidence is not ſo likewiſe: for, in ſhort, is it evident that every particle of matter is naturally ſuſceptible of every ſpecies of motion and figure; and that there are no particular atoms, of any nature whatever, naturally incapable of acquiring the nature and eſſence of other particular atoms? As I ſee no convincing reaſon for eſtabliſhing this opinion as certain, there is no demonſtrative argument to conſider it as falſe. Nay, perhaps it might help to explain what ancient philoſophy meant to expreſs by the famous term of *ſubſtantial form*. Be that as it may, the word *form* naturally leads us to what is neceſſary to be explained on the ſubject of forms.

CHAPTER II.

Of Form.

475. Definition of form.

FORM is uſually defined to be *what is leaſt common, moſt particular*, or *moſt diſtinguiſhed, in a being*. Though *form*, by this definition, ſeems capable of being applied to minds, as well as bodies; nevertheleſs, according to general cuſtom, form as well as matter is ſaid only of bodies. I would, therefore, willingly define the form of bodies, which is within the reach of our capacity, and of which we can judge, as *the portion or degree of motion and arrangement*, which determines us to give to a certain portion of matter a particular denomination, in preference to any other denomination.

476. A ſpecies of form of which nothing is to be ſaid.

It is plain I do not ſpeak here of that *form* which might be ſuppoſed to conſiſt in a ſeed, or particular atom that ſhould ſurpaſs the reach of our ſenſes, and conſequently the extent of our knowledge; for we can ſay nothing of what we are incapable of knowing, and we know nothing of which we have not acquired the primary idea by the channel of experience and ſenſation. I ſpeak

PART IV.

ſpeak ſtill leſs of the form of animals, whoſe nature is entirely unknown to us.

477. We cannot diſcern the preciſe degree of motion and configuration that conſtitutes a particular form.

What has been however ſaid of the general form of bodies, is ſufficient to give us a diſtinct idea of all that is comprehended under the name of form purely corporeal: not that we can thereby always diſcern what preciſely conſtitutes the form of each body, that is, in what degree of motion, order, ſituation, and configuration of its moſt minute parts, the form of each body conſiſts. This is the object of phyſical experiments, which are generally attended with very little ſucceſs: but the analogy between one form and another, and between the bodies we know and thoſe which are unknown to us, furniſhes us commonly, as to the form of bodies, with a plauſible idea that ſatisfies the mind, and to which it readily ſubmits.

478. A change of diſpoſition occaſions different forms.

As it might happen, therefore, to any ſenſible man, who had never ſeen meal or bread, to imagine nearly the ſame difference of form and ſubſtance in them as there is between gold and braſs; when he has been made to feel and ſee that the ſubſtance of bread is nothing but meal, the particles of which have been united by the conglutination of water which made it a paſte, and ſtill more cloſely joined by baking that made it bread, he will quickly judge that the water and fire have produced no other change therein, but

what

what is made by the qualities we denominate *colour* and *hardneſs*. We ſhall judge in like manner, that by a ſimilar change, in a more or leſs conſiderable degree, and in more or leſs time, what is now lead or braſs might become any other kind of metal, and perhaps gold. The other general reflections which relate to forms, will hold the place of *Firſt Truths in Natural Philoſophy*; and we ſhall begin with theſe as the *Appendix*, or Fifth Part of this work, in which we propoſe to explain the knowledge that may hold the place of Firſt Truths, with reſpect to each of the Literary Sciences moſt generally practiſed.

APPENDIX.

First Truths in the Sciences of Natural Philoſophy, Phyſic, Juriſprudence, and Divinity.

NATURAL PHILOSOPHY.

BESIDES what has been laid down reſpecting matter and form, all the firſt truths that can be diſcovered in natural philoſophy are compriſed in its uncertainty and incomprehenſibility. We have ſeen (N°. 213.) that the eſſence of things in general, and the nature of every ſubſtance, is impenetrable to our capacity. We have likewiſe obſerved that all we conceived of matter and form were no more than general and vague ideas, which can afford us but a very ſuperficial knowledge of natural bodies.

And indeed, on the one hand, we know nothing but by experience, which extends no further in us than our ſenſations and the reach of our ſenſes, which are confined within very narrow limits. On the other ſide, natural bodies, each in its form, are conſtituted only by certain modifications, circumſtances, or qualities of reſt or motion, of figure or arrangement, or of quantity or ſituation, in parts ſo imperceptible that our ſenſes cannot reach them; ſo that, in order to diſcover what they are, we have no other

APPENDIX.

reſources but conjectures and ſyſtems, examples and compariſons, and probabilities or poſſibilities, which, at bottom, afford us no certainty of any thing: they are limited therefore to opinions, that we conſider as ſufficiently ſupported when we can thence form a chain, or conſequences, in which no contradiction appears.

Though we ſhould however allow theſe privileges to the ſcience of natural philoſophers, yet a judicious perſon will not be the leſs authoriſed to look upon it as a ſpecies of romance. In matters of hiſtory, we in fact call romances thoſe works of conjecture, that are compoſed in order to ſhew what might have probably been the cauſe or effect of an hiſtorical fact that is aſſerted. Thus from a ſimple fact may be formed ſeveral different romances, that are even contradictory to each other, without any contradiction appearing in each taken ſeparately. We ſhall even ſee a very feaſible relation of the matters therein contained, without being able to perceive any ſhadow of contradiction: thoſe romances are not the more true on that account; nor will a rational man receive as truth any ſuch works, however ingenious and well-ſupported they may be, whilſt it is evident that nine, at leaſt, in ten of them, are abſolutely fictitious, and that there is no rule for judging as to the

cer-

certainty of the tenth. This is what is found in the romance of natural philoſophy. APPENDIX.

An effect in nature, by the help of a ſyſtem, may readily appear feaſible, poſſible, and even plauſible and probable, whilſt various other ſyſtems may appear equally ſo, and do appear ſo to other men. But what appears poſſible to them is not therefore ſo: (N°. 259, and 260.) what they attribute to beings, with whoſe firſt principles and ſecret ſprings they are not intimately acquainted, may very well contain a real contradiction, though there be no contradiction in what they imagine. We are certain that two ideas, ſuch as we actually have them in our minds, imply no contradiction; but we are not ſure that the things unknown to our ſenſes and experience, to which we apply thoſe ideas, are in reality the ſame as our ideas repreſent them. Let us judge of this by a moſt familiar example already quoted of corn, which ſucceſſively becomes different bodies.

We plainly ſee the *corn* become *meal*: our ſenſes ſhew us that it is by ſimply breaking or dividing the parts of the corn. We know likewiſe in what manner the *meal* becomes *bread*, but leſs clearly; for our ſenſes only ſhew us that it is a mixture of water and meal, to which the action of fire is added: but how is the water inſinuated into each imperceptible particle of

APPENDIX.

meal? Our ſenſes, I ſay, begin to be loſt, and our minds to diſcern leſs clearly. Again, in what manner does bread become chyle? Our ſenſes have ſcarcely any perception, and our minds ſtill leſs: if we open the ſtomach of an animal, we do not perceive what is the cauſe of the formation of the chyle. Is it the heat of the ſtomach? Why does not every other heat produce the ſame effect? What is the degree, quality, and nature of this heat, whoſe action is ſometimes ſtopped by the addition of a new heat? Is it a particular acid reſiding in the ſtomach? Where does it particularly reſide? Why can we not diſtinguiſh, or even perceive it, on opening the body of an animal? Beſides, as there are numberleſs ſorts of acids, of what ſpecies is that? Is it of the nature of a lemon, of that of vinegar, verjuice, or aqua fortis? What an abyſs is here for thoſe who are capable of thinking! As for thoſe who do not reflect, they ſee every thing at once. Theſe have been told that it is an *acid* in the ſtomach which occaſions digeſtion; they have frequently repeated the ſame thing: there is no difficulty in the matter with reſpect to them, becauſe they ſee none. If we advance a ſtep further, and ſeek to know how the chyle becomes *blood*, a new abyſs opens to our view; we know not even when, how, or where the chyle changes colour and becomes red. We talk

talk of, diſpute about, and form different ideas and ſyſtems of the matter: but, as a mere ſyſtem is a romance, until it be confirmed by the ſenſes united with the light of reaſon, it teaches us nothing certain; ſo that, in the place of actual truth, which is wanting, we ſubſtitute the ſhadow or appearance of truth, each of us according to our fancy: and this is what is called the ſcience of Natural Philoſophy.

Let us apply this reflection to each of the parts of natural philoſophy; to the diviſibility of matter, which conſtitutes the main part of corporeal beings, and to the qualities whence reſults the form of each of them; to the particular diſpoſitions that radically conſtitute the hardneſs and heavineſs of bodies: all which it is eſſential to know, in order to have a juſt and plauſible idea of the real conſtitution of bodies. Let us apply the ſame reflection to the general conſtitution of the univerſe, and to the formation of every thing that makes a part of it, for the explanation and ſcience of natural philoſophy: we ſhall find on one ſide the whirlwinds of Des Cartes and his three elements incompatible with any vacuum; on another ſide, the atoms of Gaſſendi and Epicurus in a motion inſeparable from a vacuum: each of theſe two ſyſtems is ſupported without a contradiction. This, as has been obſerved, is very ſuitable to the character of a romance. But

APPENDIX.

is the truth thereof better known, or more certain? We muſt be content, ſay they, when we can diſcover nothing that is more ſatisfactory. But if we can find none but imaginary ideas, cannot we avoid ſeeking them? Cannot we adhere to this eſſential point; to be ſatisfied that we know nothing, and can know nothing, as to the firſt principles of nature?

In the mean while, as we have no principles but what are impenetrable, let us apply our thoughts in order to know the effects of Nature, which are obvious to our ſenſes; and let us at leaſt know what ſhe produces, ſince we cannot diſcover how ſhe produces it. By a continued inveſtigation of effects, experience will inform us of what may, and ought to be known.

PHYSIC.

AS Phyſic has the ſame principles with natural philoſophy, of which it is no more than an extenſion and application, in order to preſerve the life and health of man; we nearly ſee what may be expected from it in practice. It is founded on experience; but, according to its own peculiar maxims, this experience is as dangerous as the ſtudy of the art is extenſive. *Ars longa, experimentum periculoſum.*

To

To avoid confuſion, however, in the art of preſerving the life and health of man, we ſhould diſtinguiſh the operations of ſurgery from all others. Theſe, eſpecially of late days, ſince they have been ſo conſiderably improved, are almoſt infallible in themſelves: ſo that they prove ineffectual only through ignorance or want of dexterity in the ſurgeon, or of ſtrength in the patient to ſupport them; the rules of ſurgery being ſcarcely liable to error in any thing; becauſe they are applied to objects that are within the reach of our ſenſes and experience, and conſequently of our reaſon and induſtry.

Let us return to the conſideration of Phyſic, independently of ſurgery. Is it not likewiſe ſolely founded on experience? And what are the aphoriſms, or rules of phyſic, but a collection of particular experiments that are applied as occaſion and neceſſity require? But, if the experiments were ſuch as they are here ſuppoſed, they would always be infallible, and conſtantly produce their effect. This however is far from being the caſe: the reaſon is, theſe experiments have been made on certain ſubjects, and in conjunctures of conſtitution, ſeaſon, degree of diſeaſe, and a hundred other particular circumſtances, which are rarely ever to be found entirely the ſame a ſecond time; ſo that a remedy which may have ſucceeded twice or thrice in a pleuriſy, ſhall fail on twenty other occaſions:

APPENDIX. occaſions: that is to ſay, the ſame diſeaſe, in two different conſtitutions, is no longer exactly the ſame in all reſpects; and conſtitutions are at leaſt as various as the faces and external forms of men. A coat that may be well adapted to the ſhape and ſize of two or three perſons, will be very unſuitable to twenty others. Beſides, though conſtitutions ſhould be ſimilar or alike, a ſeaſon more moiſt or dry, colder or warmer, air more or leſs pure, or more or leſs ſharp, occaſion in diſeaſes real diſtinctions that are often important, and more frequently ſtill imperceptible to all the ſagacity of our ſenſes, and all the acuteneſs of our underſtanding.

The very principles of diſorders in general are in the blood, the humours, the ſpirits, the fibres, and the moſt ſecret and moſt ſubtle particles of the human body, into which we cannot penetrate: nor can our underſtanding proceed in ſuch an enquiry but by ſyſtems and conjectures, which ſcarcely poſſeſs any ſuperior degree of probability over other ſyſtems and conjectures entirely different. This we have ſeen; and the matter is evident from the different arguments of phyſicians, and from their various opinions, in the daily conſultations that are held on patients: nothing is more uncommon than to find phyſicians united in the ſame ſentiments.

From

From this oppoſition or diverſity of opinions, it is clear that the reſolution ultimately taken, is formed as it were upon chance; and that, conſidering the authority and capacity of different phyſicians, there is as much to fear as to hope from following or relinquiſhing the opinion of one rather than another. Hence it might happen that phyſic, as being built on ſyſtems and conjectures, has not always been very ſalutary to the bulk of mankind; for if it frequently produces beneficial effects, which we cannot doubt, experience demonſtrates that it likewiſe occaſions injurious conſequences; ſo that, in countries where the moſt celebrated phyſicians flouriſh, we do not ſee that the inhabitants are leſs frequently ill, or longer lived, excepting however when ſurgery is concerned, than in thoſe places where no particular profeſſion of phyſic is exerciſed, and where every one preſerves himſelf as well as he can, and according to the ſenſe he has of the nature of the diſeaſe, and of death.

It would be wrong, however, to have leſs reſpect on that account for phyſic and phyſicians; or to complain, as people do ſometimes, that they only deceive and impoſe on us. It is not them we are to blame, but ourſelves, if we are deceived. They do their beſt, and act according to the rules of an art that cannot penetrate farther than it does into the principles of nature.

This

APPENDIX. This we ſhould know; and when they have employed all their ſtudy and knowledge, what can they do more? They may perhaps do us an injury, but more probably they will afford us relief; and one thing at leaſt is certain, that there is no profeſſion in the univerſe from which we have more to hope. "After all," ſaid an eminent ſtateſman, "when I am ſick, I ſhall rather "have recourſe to my phyſician than my lawyer."

It is moreover certain, that great advantages may be derived from a phyſician, who, without relying on any of thoſe ſyſtems in which the art of phyſic is, perhaps too generally, thought to conſiſt, but well knowing the principles of the conſtitution of the human body, has great experience in the moſt common diſorders, and beſt approved medicines, with a large fund of good ſenſe, a perfect knowledge of the conſtitution of the patient he attends, and a particular and ſedulous obſervation of the moſt minute ſymptoms of the diſeaſe.

Such a phyſician will appear ſtill more eſtimable, perhaps, if he be leſs ſtudious to diſcover remedies more expenſive, and of difficult uſe, than thoſe deſigned by providence for re-eſtabliſhing the health of the ordinary ranks of mankind, of which the application is ſimple and eaſy, and of which alſo the moſt eſſential part frequently conſiſts in diet, reſt, and patience.

J U-

APPENDIX.

JURISPRUDENCE.

JURISPRUDENCE is the knowledge of laws eſtabliſhed for the maintenance of order and peace in civil ſociety. It is with this view that it preſcribes, in detail, certain maxims in order to determine diſputes that ariſe among men; ſo that civilians, who make thoſe maxims their principal guides, reſpect them as ſo many oracles, of the truth of which it is not allowed to entertain a doubt. They think right, as they conſider thoſe maxims already eſtabliſhed in a nation or country, where, if they be once adopted, they ſhould be faithfully and conſtantly obeyed, as furniſhing true rules for terminating or preventing diſputes that might ariſe in that nation. But ſome people ſeem to imagine that the laws which they follow are the true rules of reaſon and common ſenſe: this however muſt not be admitted: it is rather a firſt truth, with reſpect to juriſprudence, that the chief uſe of laws is to eſtabliſh permanent regulations for mankind, that they may know how they are to conduct themſelves, and avoid diſſenſions and law-ſuits. What is however preſcribed by one law is no farther judicious, but that another law,

APPENDIX.

law, enjoining the direct contrary, may be equally conformable to reaſon and good ſenſe. This is obvious in the form of the laws of different nations or provinces. In one, the eldeſt ſons of families inherit the eſtates; in another, all the children are equal ſharers in the inheritance: in ſome, women may enjoy the fortune of their huſbands; in others they cannot. This matter is evident in a thouſand other inſtances. Now, among ſo many contradictory laws, it does not appear that one is manifeſtly more founded on reaſon than another.

If, indeed, common ſenſe were really conſpicuous on one particular ſide, the majority of mankind would have followed it. (No. 33, and the following.) Nations or provinces, on the contrary, adhere conſtantly to their own laws; and none of them are willing to allow other laws to be more rational, at leaſt with reſpect to the total effects of a law: for, as to certain circumſtances, they will not heſitate to acknowledge but that a law, which is approved on the whole, may have ſome particular inconvenience; but greater inconveniences will be found in a different law, it being the nature of all ſublunary things to be ſubject to inconveniences.

It is doubtleſs one, to leave ten or twelve children together without any fortune, in order to give five or ſix hundred or five or ſix thouſand a year to the eldeſt ſon, as is often the caſe in England

land and Normandy: but there is another inconvenience by dividing ſuch a fortune between a dozen children, ſo as to leave none of them in a condition to ſupport the rank and dignity of the family, and of courſe diſabling them from procuring protection, friends, reſpect or intereſt for their brothers and ſiſters. It is therefore clear, that there are inconveniences in each of the various laws of different countries, and that it cannot be abſolutely determined which has a ſuperior excellence over the reſt; the opinions and ſentiments of mankind being as various on the ſubject, as countries and nations. APPENDIX.

That is, ſaid an able lawyer, the defect of particular laws, known by the name of Common Law, which arbitrary practice and blind cuſtom have eſtabliſhed, as it were, by chance or accident; but it is not the ſame with regard to the Roman code, which conſtitutes the ſubſtance of what is eminently diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of Juriſprudence; becauſe it is the fruit of the pureſt reaſoning and moſt profound reſearches of the human mind. The lawyer would thereby fain inſinuate, that we could not oppoſe any rule of the Roman inſtitutes without acting at the ſame time contrary to common ſenſe: whereupon he expatiated with great eloquence, in ſupport of the Roman Law, that authoriſes adoptions: Owing to the wiſdom of this law, ſaid he,

it

APPENDIX.

it is not blind and inconſiderate nature that gives children and heirs to fathers, who are men of merit and probity; it is reaſon that directs them to ſelect thoſe whom they find worthy of them. It is eaſy to judge how far the language of an eloquent lawyer might be extended; but for my own part, without attempting to borrow any aſſiſtance from oratory, I ſimply aſked him whether the law of adoption among the Romans did not extend to all fathers in general; or whether he thought all fathers were equally governed by equity and reaſon, with reſpect to all their children? If not, as experience demonſtrates, how dangerous muſt it be to give up a fortune and family to the abſolute diſpoſal of a father whoſe mind may be replete with prejudice, capricious notions, errors, and even injuſtice and cruelty to ſome of his children; and to what purpoſe do men expoſe themſelves to ſuch inconveniences? In order to beſtow the name of father and ſon in an arbitrary manner, on others beſides thoſe on whom Nature has conferred them, and whom ſhe has actually made, one truely a father, and the other as truely a ſon; impoſing on the one, an obligation of real kindneſs, that of real obedience on the other, on both, mutual affection; ſentiments which, unfortunately, are not always equally found in the natural inclinations of different perſons, but which, where the natural inclinations

inclinations are defective, ſhould be ſupplied by reaſon and equity. Of thoſe nature has qualified all men to form a judgement. The argument might be extended much farther againſt this law, which is the boaſt of Roman juriſprudence; and I am perſuaded it muſt appear to more than one half of mankind rather contradictory, than conformable, to the pureſt ſentiments of nature.

Many lawyers, however, cannot be readily made to comprehend this, owing to their ſeldom judging of things in themſelves, and to the prejudice they have contracted from the habitual practice of ſubjecting their ideas to eſtabliſhed regulations. Men accuſtomed to ſaying, *It is the law*, confound thoſe words with the following, *It is reaſon:* and it is, indeed, true that thoſe expreſſions may, in one ſenſe, be taken for each other; for, *It is the law*, implies that *it is rational* to obey it in that particular country; to determine there, according to that law, whatever diſputes may ariſe with regard to what it enjoins; and even to pay no regard, on ſuch an occaſion, to all the arguments that may be objected againſt it; for though they ſhould be equally rational, or even more ſo, they are no longer admiſſible, with reſpect to our actions in the country where the law is already eſtabliſhed. But, without dwelling longer upon the matter, a mind impreſſed with laws which he has conſidered as the only rules

of

APPENDIX.

of prudent conduct, confines all his reaſon to them; and looks no farther. It is nearly the ſame with reſpect to decrees ratified by the ſupreme legiſlature of the countries where we reſide: though they may have been made without a juſt diſcernment, theſe decrees however, ſo ratified, hold the place of reaſon.

But why theſe reflections with regard to juriſprudence, when it has been already acknowledged that reaſon enjoins us to ſubmit to the laws? Becauſe, on a variety of occaſions which the laws cannot particularly and circumſtantially include, or with regard to which they have not been ſufficiently explicit, Juriſprudence ſhould emancipate herſelf from the ſhackles of authority, in order to find out, among all the laws of the univerſe, or rather in the law of Nature, which is the fountain of all others, an impartial rule of determination, according to the circumſtances or particular merits of the caſe. There ſeems, in fact, to be a miſtake with regard to laws in general; it is in ſuppoſing that they have provided for all caſes. Hence it has been eſtabliſhed as a maxim in many courts, that an action or ſuit muſt be either gained or loſt entirely, by ſuppoſing one of the two parties in the ſame action to be totally in the right, and the other totally in the wrong. Now I am apt to think it might rather be admitted as a firſt truth, that, in moſt actions or

ſuits

ſuits which are juſt ſuits or actions, neither of the two parties is abſolutely right or wrong; becauſe where the law is not perfectly clear, it muſt not be looked upon to decide; and if it does not decide, it is as if there were no law; and where there is no law, neither of the two parties has acted contrary to law, and neither ſhould loſe the cauſe: if neither the one nor the other ſhould loſe it, ſo neither has, by virtue of the laws, more right to gain it than the other; and in that caſe, far from giving a decree againſt one rather than the other, all that remains to be done is to divide the matter equally, if the law of nature furniſhes no better rule for a determination.

But to what numberleſs obſcurities, interpretations, diſtinctions, and exceptions, is not the law of nature itſelf ſubject? To obviate theſe inconveniences, to which poſitive laws are ſtill more liable, the principal care in deciding a diſpute or action, ſhould be to attend to the circumſtances of the caſe, as they cannot be too minutely examined: and in reality, though the deciſion ſhould be clear, according to the expreſs words of the law, yet a ſimple circumſtance often requires a deciſion entirely different: and this is what chiefly occaſions ſo great a contrariety in a conſiderable number of decrees grounded upon the ſame law.

This is the rule followed by two of the moſt equitable tribunals in France; the Court of the

APPENDIX. Marſhals of France for the nobility, and that of the Conſular Judges with reſpect to the mercantile body. The latter have had, for a time, ſome written regulations; but it is a matter of doubt, upon the whole, whether this circumſtance has contributed to render their decrees more equitable. Written laws can rarely ever enter into a detail of circumſtances which are generally of the greateſt uſe towards the juſt deciſion of a law-ſuit; whilſt ſuch laws, on the other hand, impoſe ſubjection to a number of formalities, which, however judicious they may be in themſelves, tend leſs, in fact, to ſupport the cauſe of equity, than to encourage and extend the arts of chicanery. Nor do we in reality ſee, in thoſe countries where there are but few written laws, that juſtice is leſs faithfully adminiſtered than in any other place. If errors and injuſtice be committed there ſometimes, through the perſonal defects of the judges, and though ſuch misfortunes ſhould be as frequent in thoſe places as in countries that have the greateſt multiplicity of laws; they have the advantage at leaſt to be freed from thoſe irkſome delays and heavy charges, which attend the formalities and various interpretations of written laws; which are certainly the moſt intolerable and vexatious burthen of law-ſuits, and one of the moſt deſtructive plagues of civil ſociety.

APPENDIX.

DIVINITY.

NATURAL Religion, or the ſimple dictates of reaſon alone, teach us that we muſt equally ſubmit our minds and hearts, our underſtanding and will, to God; our minds, in judging true whatever he commands us to believe; our will, by inclining it to all that he enjoins us to practiſe. On one hand, the authority of a God who is incapable either of deceiving us, or being deceived himſelf; on the other ſide, his purity and ſanctity, which can exact nothing but what is juſt, carry with them the fulleſt conviction of the truth of thoſe matters.

The incomprehenſibility therefore of thoſe myſteries, which religion propoſes as objects of our faith, affords no pretext to a rational mind to diſpute their truth: the moſt ſimple light of nature informs us that God can, and really has performed things abſolutely incomprehenſible to the very limited ideas of human capacity, and that he can impoſe very wiſe commands upon us, the wiſdom of which we may not fully diſcern. Theſe are points which, in matters of religion and divinity, may be looked upon as ſo many firſt truths, in the ſenſe mentioned (N°. 90.) The following ſhould be equally admitted.

APPENDIX.

It is the chriſtian religion that teaches us what God propoſes to our faith and practice. This religion is no other but the body of the faithful, or church of Chriſt, which teſtifies what God has ſaid and commanded: ſo that true divinity ſolely conſiſts in proving, firſt, that the teſtimony of the Chriſtian church is irreproachable; ſecondly, that the ſame church, in conſequence of the commands of God, teaches us the articles that conſtitute the object of our belief and worſhip. Every thing elſe appears a matter of ſupererogation in divinity.

And, in fact, ſhould it be demonſtrated that the doctrines of religion are conformable to the pureſt light of human reaſon, it might be allowed to be an ingenious and even uſeful exerciſe; but it would rather belong to the province of philoſophy than that of divinity, as the buſineſs of the latter is only to eſtabliſh articles of religion; and the conformity between the word of God and human reaſon is no article of religion. Religion propoſes its doctrines to us that we may believe them, and not to have them juſtified at the bar of human reaſon: not but that many of them are perfectly conſonant to reaſon; but all not being equally ſo, and being above the reach of our underſtanding, it appears that Divinity ſhould not undertake to prove its dogmas; unleſs ſo far as to prove that

the

the church of Chriſt propoſes them to our belief as taught by God, without any regard to what human reaſon may admit or reject: for, if human reaſon be employed in ſupport of certain points of religion, other articles, in which that reaſon can have no concern, would, on that account, be leſs ſupported; a circumſtance that appears dangerous to the ſanctity and ſtrength of our faith.

There are in reality many doctrines to which mere human reaſon cannot be reconciled, as they contain myſteries entirely ſupernatural; that is, beyond the utmoſt limits of our natural capacity, and which it never can reach naturally. Would it not therefore be uſing weapons againſt ourſelves, to pretend to prove to reaſon a thing which we acknowledge reaſon cannot reach?

Some perſons pretend to ſay, that Divinity undertakes only to prove that our dogmas are above the powers of reaſon, without being contrary to reaſon. I know not whether people have a very clear idea under thoſe expreſſions; for, if we acknowledge that an object is above reaſon and its powers, how are we to prove that this object is not contrary to it? In order to be able to ſhew the oppoſition or non-oppoſition of any object to reaſon, it is neceſſary we ſhould be perfectly acquainted with the object in every

APPENDIX.

particular belonging to it; otherwiſe ſome part of the object would be unknown to us; and, if unknown, how are we to prove that the part ſo unknown is not contrary to reaſon? It would be like attempting to prove, or aſſert, that a medicine, to which, in ſome reſpects, we are ſtrangers, is no way contrary to reaſon in thoſe very reſpects; but how are we to be certain of this, if we have no knowledge of it?

We may indeed very juſtly prove, in general, and we ſhould prove, that our dogmas are not contrary to reaſon, inaſmuch as we cannot rationally diſpute the truth of a doctrine, when we acknowledge that God judges and declares it to be true: and, in that ſenſe, our dogmas not only are not contrary to reaſon, but are actually conformable to it; as reaſon actually ſuggeſts that they deſerve to be eſteemed true from the judgement and truth of God. It does not however appear, that on this account we are authoriſed in an attempt to prove the truth of a doctrine, as being only above reaſon, and not contrary to reaſon; for, with regard to what we acknowledge to be above our reaſon, conſidering it as ſuch, we cannot rationally undertake to prove any thing abſolutely for or againſt it; we can neither rationally affirm nor deny any thing concerning it, as it is beyond the reach of our un-

der-

derſtanding, and unreaſonable to attempt to employ our reaſon on an object which we acknowledge it cannot comprehend.

When an adverſary, therefore, attacks any of the myſteries of Chriſtianity, upon a pretence that they are contrary to reaſon, inſtead of refuting him by arguments relative to the nature of the particular object in diſpute, which is above the reach of our underſtanding, the ſhorteſt anſwer, and at the ſame time the moſt plauſible and ſolid that can be given, is, to ſay that the objection is ridiculous and frivolous; for, as it relates to an object which we declare to be ſupernatural, and above the natural powers of human underſtanding, we thereby acknowledge it to be of a nature incapable of being either attacked or defended by mere natural reaſon, without the aſſiſtance of divine authority.

It is however neceſſary to obſerve, that the dogmas of faith include ſupernatural truths, in ſuch a manner as to be united with natural ideas within the reach of our capacity: for example, this doctrine, *God became man*, reſults from three ideas, which are, 1ſt, The idea of God; 2dly, The idea of man; 3dly, The idea of the hypoſtatic and ſubſtantial union of God with man. The two firſt are within the natural reach of the human mind; and if we admit Jeſus Chriſt to

APPENDIX. have been *God* and *man*, we may very naturally and very juſtly conclude, that, as God, he was *immortal*, *omnipotent*, &c. and that, on the other hand, as man, he was *mortal*, *paſſive*, &c. for, as our mind hath naturally the idea both of God and man, it may thence likewiſe naturally conclude whatever is neceſſarily united either with the idea of God, or the idea of man: but, with regard to the third idea included in the dogma, which is the idea of the *union of God with man in the ſame perſon*, our mind, and our reaſon, are loſt therein; nor ſhould we ever employ them on ſuch an object, unleſs to ſhew, as hath been obſerved, that this myſtery, which is naturally incredible to the human mind, becomes very credible by the authority of God, who revealed it, and by the authority of the church of Chriſt, which, by the miracles of its eſtabliſhment and propagation, teſtifies that God truly revealed it.

This anſwer diſſipates the vain and ſubtle arguments of Socinians, and of all pretended free-thinkers. In vain will they ſay, that we admit doctrines, which, as they deſtroy the light of reaſon, ſhould be rejected by that very reaſon, as this was given to us by God for our guide and direction. In anſwer to the Socinians, as well as to Le Clerc, we ſay, that it is ridiculous in them to attempt to ſhew a contradiction in myſteries,

ſteries, which we admit to be above the reach of our underſtanding and theirs; that what is above the powers of our reaſon, does not deſtroy reaſon; and, ſo far from having any right to reject a truth taught by God, on the pretence of not comprehending it, we are indiſpenſibly obliged to acknowledge that whatever an infinite being, ſuch as God, be in himſelf, and all that he can perform, infinitely ſurpaſs our higheſt conception: ſo that for any man to deny the truth of a fact, merely becauſe he does not conceive it, when it is ſupported by juſt teſtimonies that make it credible, is no leſs abſurd in him, than it would be impertinent in a man born blind to deny the exiſtence of colours and light, becauſe, with all the efforts of his mind, it is impoſſible for him to form any idea of thoſe things. This anſwer, I ſay, is incomparably better than to enter into any diſcuſſion with Socinians, in order to ſhew the poſſibility of the myſtery of the Incarnation; for, in diſputes on ſuch ſublime articles, occaſion may be given to the enemies of the Chriſtian faith to make falſe and ſophiſtical replies, that cannot be eaſily diſtinguiſhed from ſuch as are true, and which thereby expoſe contentious perſons to the danger of being perplexed with doubts and uncertainties, where they would have found nothing but a ju-

APPENDIX.

judicious and plauſible motive for ſubjecting their weak and natural capacities to the infinite intelligence of God, ſuppoſing he has revealed certain truths, and to the authority of the apoſtles and church of Chriſt, which teaches us that God has actually revealed them. If a proper attention were paid to theſe Firſt Truths in the Science of Divinity, the ſtudy thereof, to all appearance, would, by that means, become more ſimple and ſhort, and the advantages thence reſulting more ſolid and extenſive.

RE-

REMARKS

On the Philoſophical Writings of DES CARTES, LOCKE, MALBRANCHE, LE CLERC, CROUZAS, and REGIS.

REMARKS

On the principles, or metaphyſics, of DES CARTES.
Printed at Amſterdam, in 1692.

ARTICLE I.

I. *Page* 1. THE care which Deſcartes takes in adviſing us to be on our guard againſt all prejudices in general, is one of the moſt effectual methods of leading men to the diſcovery of truth: and, in fact, from his time, men have learned to reaſon with more circumſpection, and in many reſpects with greater ſucceſs.

II. *Pag.* 3. The attention which he excited, with regard to the nature of the ſoul or mind, and that of bodies or matter, has more clearly and preciſely made known the difference between theſe two ſubſtances, which it is of the utmoſt importance to diſtinguiſh properly.

III. *Pag.* 5. It is a remark, not only judicious, but of the moſt extenſive uſe, to have obſerved that

REMARKS. that we muſt not ſeek to define every thing, as the generality of philoſophers have endeavoured to do; nor at leaſt attempt to make a thing more clear by a definition; as things that are very ſimple and obvious of themſelves, ſuch as ſentiment, are more clear than any definition that can be adduced.

IV. *Pag.* 9. The reflection made by Des Cartes, on the ſuperiority of the being of God, is the baſis of natural religion. The intelligence of God, ſays he, is ſo tranſcendently ſuperior to all others, that we ſhould not make the leaſt difficulty of believing what he reveals to us of the myſteries of his nature and power; ſo that what he is in himſelf, and what he can perform, are not the leſs real, though they ſurpaſs all the powers of our comprehenſion and ideas. It is proper to remark that this obſervation of Des Cartes is common to him and all philoſophers, and even to thoſe who differ moſt from him, ſuch as Locke: this plainly ſhews the extravagant folly of ſome pretended free-thinkers, and really ſuperficial minds, who refuſe to believe the myſteries of religion, on the pretence of not comprehending them.

V. *Pag.* 7. Des Cartes has the honour of being the firſt in our times, who has inſiſted on this maxim, equally certain and plauſible; that it

is unreaſonable in finite capacities like ours to attempt to comprehend infinity, or reaſon about it. REMARKS.

VI. *Pag.* 10. It is, ſays he, a wrong way of thinking, to give our *aſſent*, even to truth, when we do not clearly perceive it; and when we only ſuppoſe that we ſee it, or have ſeen it, clearly. This is a maxim of the greateſt utility, to prevent our minds from being deceived by various appearances of truth.

Pag. 21, 22. Among a variety of cauſes of our prejudices, he has pointed out the moſt contagious, and moſt important, which is, that we affix our ideas to words; and that afterwards, recollecting rather words than ideas, we give our *aſſent* to words, which we do not underſtand, from a ſuppoſition that we have clearly underſtood them. This principle is perhaps the moſt ſolid and eſſential of all the philoſophy of Des Cartes, and it were to be wiſhed that he himſelf had never deviated from it in practice.

VII. The principles and method of Des Cartes have been in general of very great utility, by habituating us to analyſe words and ideas with greater preciſion; for, by urging us to a cloſer inveſtigation of opinions propoſed, they have more ſecurely conducted us in the road to truth.

A R-

REMARKS.

ARTICLE II.

VIII. *Pag.* 1. "In order to oppoſe every pre-"judice that is poſſible, we ſhall doubt whether "any thing ſenſible or imaginable exiſts, &c. "We ſhall alſo doubt of what we conſidered as "moſt certain, ſuch as mathematical demon-"ſtrations, &c."

Remark. We are perſuaded that Des Cartes did not mean to ſay any thing but what was rational on this occaſion: but nothing can be, in fact, leſs rational than what he ſays; for, if we conceive the terms, can we ever doubt whether a triangle be different from a circle? What Des Cartes means here, and what has made ſo much noiſe, to no manner of purpoſe, is reduced to a ſenſible, but common maxim, which he explains, pag. 23. Art. 25. and which is, that, *in order to purſue an infallible method in philoſophy, we ſhould be extremely cautious not to give way to any opinion, not even to thoſe we have received, if, upon a ſecond examination, we ſhould not find the truth again confirmed.*

IX. *Pag.* 2. "We know not whether God "has not made us of ſuch a nature as to be de-"ceived in every thing."

Remark. Notwithſtanding this pretended ignorance, can we be deceived in thinking that we exiſt,

exiſt, and that two and two make four? Why then introduce a motive for doubting, where it is abſolutely impoſſible to doubt? Does this denote a clear idea of what is advanced? REMARKS.

Beſides, we are exhorted to doubt, at the very moment when it is ſuppoſed that we have not as yet a knowledge of any thing true; we therefore do not then know whether a God exiſts. In that caſe what God may, or may not, have performed, is no motive nor reaſon for doubting; as what we know not can be no motive with us.

X. *Pag.* 3. *Art.* 8. "We ſee clearly that "neither figure nor extenſion belong to our "thought."

Remark. Des Cartes confounds here, *ſeeing clearly that a thing is not*, with *not ſeeing that it is in any manner whatever.*

XI. *Pag.* 2. *I think; therefore I exiſt:* Vid N°. 12. Des Cartes ſays that this is the firſt and moſt certain thing we know; *prima & certiſſima cognitio*; in which he has ſpoken with very little propriety or truth, if he pretended that the reflection *I think*, is the firſt propoſition or thought we pay attention to, in order to make uſe of it as the principle of our reaſoning. Thouſands have drawn a multiplicity of concluſions, without having ever, perhaps, had the propoſition, *I think*, actually

REMARKS. in their minds: it is not therefore the firſt principle; and, at moſt, it can only be ſaid to be one of the firſt principles. Beſides, why ſhould all our concluſions, or arguments, be deduced from one principle? If I admit with Des Cartes this firſt principle alone, *I think*; or, with the generality of philoſophers, this other ſingle firſt principle, *It is impoſſible for a thing to be, and not to be*; from which of the two ſhall I draw this conſequence, *There exiſt, therefore, other beings beſides me?* or this, *All men cannot conſpire to deceive me by an unanimous teſtimony?* There is then, in the human mind, no ſingle principle of reaſoning and knowledge, unleſs it be, perhaps, that on which this whole Treatiſe has been founded; it is, that *what is in the minds of all men is indubitably true.*

XII. *Pag.* 5. *The greater the objective perfection of our ideas, the more perfect alſo muſt be their cauſe.* This myſterious language, reduced to its juſt value, as far as I can ſee, means only what is commonly ſaid, that the cauſe is more perfect than the effect: but, if the Reader will peruſe the article I have written on the nature of what is *perfect*, he will ſee that the common axiom itſelf ſtands greatly in need of explanation; for, in fine, fire is the cauſe of bread, as the bread thereby ceaſes to be dough, to become bread. I ſhould be glad to know in what fire is more perfect

fect than bread. Vide the Chapter of *Perfect*, N°. 267, &c. REMARKS.

XIII. *Pag.* 5. "Though we do not compre-
"hend the ſupreme perfections of God, becauſe
"it is the nature of infinity not to be compre-
"henſible by finite beings, ſuch as we are; ne-
"vertheleſs we can conceive thoſe perfections
"more clearly, and more diſtinctly, than any
"corporeal things."

Remark. Des Cartes moſt aſſuredly did not reflect upon what he has here advanced. The immutability of God, and his free-will, are perfections in God; and a triangle is a corporeal ſubſtance: Whom, however, ſhall he be able to perſuade, that we can more diſtinctly, and more clearly, comprehend the immutability and free-will of God, than we conceive the nature of a triangle?

XIV. *Pag.* 7. "We ſhall term indefinite, all
"thoſe things in which we can perceive no end;
"ſuch as the diviſible particles of matter, or
"the number of ſtars that God is capable of
"creating."

Remark. With reſpect to us, and to what we are capable of knowing, there was no reaſon for diſtinguiſhing *infinite* from *indefinite*. If Des Cartes pretends to conceive any thing different

REMARKS. in God when he ſtyles him *infinite* from what he does when he terms him *indefinite*, he ſays things that he does not underſtand: for, according to him, in the very ſame page 7, we comprehend nothing of *infinity*; and we ſhould not attempt to ſpeak thereof, as we have no idea of it: he cannot therefore ſay, nor conceive, what *infinite* is, with regard to *indefinite*. He ſeems again to have confounded two things on this occaſion; firſt, our not being able to diſcover any limits in God; and, ſecondly, ſeeing *that God is without limits*. In order to ſee that God is without limits, it would be neceſſary to ſee the abſolute extent of the whole eſſence of God, which is infinite; a thing impoſſible to a finite capacity: but, to be incapable of diſcovering any limits in God, nothing is wanting but a finite mind like ours, that perceives an object of which the extent ſurpaſſes our underſtanding: but, let me repeat it again, this is nothing but the real *indefinite* of Des Cartes.

XV. *Pag.* 9. "In order to judge, not only "the underſtanding is neceſſary, but likewiſe the "will."

Remark. I know not whether Des Cartes rightly diſtinguiſhed the terms here uſed. It is a mere nominal queſtion: the will has no other ſhare in the judgement, but in freely permitting the underſtanding to conſider, or not conſider,

two

two ideas: if the will does not permit, the understanding cannot judge, as it hath not preſent the two ideas between which it is neceſſary to judge; and, if the will permits, it then judges. To know whether this permiſſion of the will ſhould be called the judgement itſelf, is, I ſay, rather a nominal queſtion, and conſequently frivolous. REMARKS

XVI. *Pag.* 12. Des Cartes endeavours to eſtabliſh a difference between a clear idea and a diſtinct idea, but without foundation, as hath been obſerved in another place. Every clear idea, being perceived in its whole extent, ſhews entirely what it is in itſelf, and that it is no other idea whatever: it is in this laſt reſpect we call it a diſtinct idea.

XVII. *Pag.* 12. Des Cartes, having ſaid that all that we can perceive are either things, or qualities and properties of things, includes equally among things, ſubſtance, duration, order, and number.

Remark. I do not conceive how he could have included any thing elſe in things but ſubſtances, taking the word *things* as excluding modifications or qualities of things. Take away all ſubſtances, what thing can remain in the world? Can there exiſt *duration*, *order*, or *number*, with-

REMARKS. out ſubſtance? Are duration, order, and number, any other things but ſubſtances that continue, are arranged, or numbered together? Our author, therefore, appears to have been miſtaken, in taking here, according to cuſtom, arbitrary ideas of things for things themſelves. Duration, order, and number, are nothing but ſubſtances under different points of view.—This he himſelf has expreſsly obſerved, page 15, by ſaying, that a thing, or ſubſtance, in not periſhing immediately after the firſt moment of its exiſtence, is *duration*; in its being ſo diſpoſed as to concur with another thing to the ſame end, it is *order*; in making up, with other things, certain unities, it is *number*. Our minds have the power of conſidering one of thoſe points, without paying any attention to the ſubſtance itſelf; and this is what is called abſtraction: but we muſt not therefore admit as many things as abſtractions, unleſs we would adopt an ideal world, and an imaginary philoſophy.

XVIII. *Page* 13. "We experience modifica-
"tions in us, that relate neither to the ſoul nor
"the body, but which reſult from the union of
"the ſoul and body, ſuch as *appetite*, hunger
"and thirſt, &c."

Remark. It is ſpeaking very improperly, and a wrong diſtinction of ideas, to advance that

appe-

appetite belongs neither to the ſoul nor body. REMARKS.
The word *appetite* (and others ſimilar in proportion) ſignifies two or three things: 1ſt, The motion that is made in the body, and by means of which the ſoul perceives the ſentiment of *appetite*: 2dly, It ſignifies the ſentiment itſelf perceived by the ſoul: 3dly, It means thoſe two things united together. In the firſt inſtance, appetite belongs very properly and ſolely to the body, and is a true modification of the body; in the ſecond caſe, appetite belongs very properly and ſolely to the ſoul, and is a real modification of the ſoul; in the third inſtance, appetite equally appertains both to the body and ſoul, as the word then ſignifies two modifications, one of the body, and the other of the ſoul, both mutually depending on each other.

XIX. *Pag.* 13. "When we acknowledge cer-
"tain propoſitions, we do not conſider them as
"modifications, but as eternal truths fixed in
"our minds."

Remark. What Des Cartes ſays here, that we conſider certain propoſitions as eternal truths, fixed in our minds, is greatly ſubject to illuſion; for it leads us to believe, and has even perſuaded many to think, that we have in our minds certain propoſitions or truths, which ſubſiſted there eternally. This is a mere chimera, which has

REMARKS. been fully expoſed by Locke, in his *Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding*.

XX. *Pag.* 15. "Theſe eternal truths are "clearly perceived, but not by ſome perſons, "owing perhaps to their prejudices."

Remark. If ſome people do not perceive theſe notions, which Des Cartes has honoured with the name of *eternal truths*, and which are commonly called *axioms*, we muſt not aſcribe it, in general, to their prejudice, but to their want of experience. Thus children, till a certain age, have not theſe notions, though they may have a knowledge of many other things, becauſe they have not as yet had experience, or opportunities of obſerving that theſe notions were true. A child, for example, as ſoon as he begins to form any judgement, thinks, and knows very well, that *ſuch a thing is that thing, and not another thing*; but he does not as yet obſerve, that *it is impoſſible a thing ſhould be and not be at the ſame time*. The latter knowledge is derived only from experience and reflection, which in time make him ſenſible, that, whatever efforts he may exert, he never can be able to judge that the ſame thing is not what it is, *i. e.* that it is, and it is not; yet it is not by any prejudice that he was prevented from forming this judgement before,

fore, as he never was prepoſſeſſed with any contrary maxim or opinion. REMARKS.

XXI. *Pag.* 14. "The word *ſubſtance* cannot "be univocal with reſpect to God and creatures, "as no idea of the word can be common to God "and creatures."

Remark. I make a pauſe at theſe words, only to wonder how any man of the capacity of Des Cartes ſhould for a moment occupy his mind with a reflection that depends entirely on a ſimple equivocation. Thoſe who are verſed in the practice of the ſchools will not fail to ſmile on the occaſion, and no more is requiſite.

XXII. *Pag.* 15. "Duration, order, and num-"ber, are not different from ſubſtances; but are "only the modes or aſpects under which we "conſider them."

Remark. This reflection is very juſt, and it is what I have advanced; but it does not agree with what Des Cartes has aſſerted pag. 12. where he equally includes among things, *ſubſtance*, *duration*, *order*, and *number*: he deſtroys on one ſide what he eſtabliſhes on the other.

XXIII. *Pag.* 18. *Art.* 43. "Thought and "extenſion may be conſidered as conſtituting "the nature of the mind and body."

Re-

REMARKS. *Remark.* It is true, that, with reſpect to us, and the natural ſtate of things, there is no attribute by which we can more eſſentially diſcern the nature of the mind, than by *thinking*; and that of the body, than by its *being capable of extenſion*: but we muſt not forget that the nature and eſſence of things, according to our knowledge, are not preciſely what they are in themſelves (N°. 469). Beſides, we neither are, nor can be, aſſured that the ſoul always thinks (N°. 422). It would be wrong therefore to aſſert, that the real and phyſical eſſence of the ſoul conſiſts in actually thinking.

XXIV. *Pag.* 331. "We know that the world "has no bounds."

Remark. It is true that we know not its bounds; but it is falſe to ſay, we know *that the world has no bounds*: it would then be infinite, and God could not enlarge it. This appears a hazardous notion, according to the dogmas of divinity; neither is it ſupported by any plauſible argument of philoſophy. What Des Cartes adds afterwards does not relate to the principles of human knowledge in general, but to the principles of natural philoſophy, which forms a ſeparate ſcience.

XXV.

REMARKS.

XXV. *Pag.* 2. *of his Book of Meditations, printed at Amſterdam, in* 1698. "The things we clearly "conceive, from the very circumſtance of our "conceiving them, are true."

Remark. We have room here to lament that Des Cartes, by this propoſition, on which he founds the whole ſyſtem of his metaphyſics, has involved true metaphyſics in infinite perplexity, by confounding, as he hath done, what is true, or rather *internal truth*, with *external truth*. This ſhews the illuſion of ſo many new philoſophers, who, whilſt they have been continually repeating *truth* and clearneſs in their writings, have frequently done nothing but obſcure clearneſs itſelf, and adulterate truth.

XXVI. *Med.* 6. *Pag.* 36. "There is a real "difference between the imagination, and pure "intelligence, or underſtanding."

Remark. This difference is a chimera, or a nominal queſtion; but the example adduced by Des Cartes, and after him by the Author of the Art of Thinking, is manifeſtly wrong: it is as follows—When I figure to myſelf a triangle, which I conſider as preſent, it is by the help of *imagination*; but when I think of a figure of a thouſand angles, it is by pure intelligence or underſtanding, as I cannot repreſent it to myſelf as preſent; neither, in repreſenting it to myſelf,

REMARKS. ſelf, ſhall I be able to diſtinguiſh it from a figure of nine hundred and ninety nine angles. I ſay that it anſwers no purpoſe to ſeek, in this example, any difference between the imagination and underſtanding; for, 1ſt, It would thence follow, that the imagination were more perfect than the underſtanding, as the one gives an idea more clear, more lively, and more preſent than the other; and this would be to deſtroy the general idea, and the very idea perhaps that Des Cartes himſelf intended to eſtabliſh, with regard to pure intelligence. 2dly, It is diſtinguiſhing imagination from underſtanding to no purpoſe; for, in order to explain in what manner, and why we have a clearer idea of a triangle than of a figure of a thouſand angles, it is ſufficient to ſay, that we have not an idea ſo juſt, ſo exact and preciſe, of a figure of a thouſand angles as of the figure of a ſimple triangle, becauſe the former, being much more complicated, does not appear ſo diſtinctly either to our eyes, or to our minds; whereas a triangle, being a very ſimple figure, appears to both without difficulty or confuſion: but it by no means follows, that the triangle is preſent to the mind rather by the imagination than the underſtanding, nor a figure of a thouſand angles by the underſtanding rather than the imagination.

REMARKS.

On the Metaphyſics of LOCKE, *in his work called* AN ESSAY ON HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

Printed at Amſterdam, in 1700.

ARTICLE I.

MR. LOCKE is the firſt of the moderns who has endeavoured to inveſtigate the operations of the human mind immediately from Nature, without ſuffering himſelf to be biaſſed by opinions that are ſupported rather by ſyſtems than real evidence: his philoſophy therefore, compared to that of Des Cartes and Malbranche, appears as much ſuperior to either, as hiſtory is to romance.

II. He generally examines every ſubject by the only method of reaſoning with ſolidity; that is, by beginning with the moſt ſimple, moſt diſtinct, and moſt univerſally received ideas, that he may afterwards thence gradually deduce thoſe lights which clear up important truths for the uſe and improvement of ſcience.

IV. He has cloſely inveſtigated and laid open the fallacy of various principles of Des Cartes, and other philoſophers of our days, analyſing in a preciſe and plauſible manner the ideas which led

REMARKS.

led them into error, and diſtinguiſhing particularly the ideas of *ſolidity* or impenetrability from thoſe of *extenſion* or ſpace.

V. Thus he very diſtinctly explains, *pag.* 121, the manner of our conceiving, by abſtraction, the motion of a body from one place to another, without there being any neceſſity therefore for our thinking of other bodies that may occupy the place quitted by the firſt. The idea of the place ſo quitted is the abſolute idea of *ſpace*, and not the idea of ſolidity, as the latter expreſsly includes the idea of *reſiſtance*. Granting even that ſpace cannot really be without ſolidity, as colour cannot exiſt without extenſion, it does not therefore follow that the idea of ſpace, or the idea of colour, are the idea of extenſion.

VI. *Pag.* 666. This philoſopher has made an ingenious diſtinction between the idea of *wit* and the idea of judgement: he obſerves, that wit conſiſts in forming pleaſing images, by quickly collecting ideas that have ſome ſimilarity or relation; judgement, on the contrary, he ſays, conſiſts in diſcerning the moſt minute difference to be found in ideas that have the neareſt reſemblance: ſo that, according to this, a perſon may poſſeſs a great ſhare of wit, and at the ſame time have but little judgement.

VII. *Pag.* 183. His reflections on the notion of *place* are juſt and clear. Place, according to him,

him, is nothing but the relation as to diſtance between one body and ſome other, which we ſuppoſe fixed at the time: thus, according to the relation to different bodies, a thing is ſaid to change or not change its place. The men, for example, that are ranged on a cheſs-board, are ſaid to remain in the ſame place, although the cheſs-board be moved from one place to another: the reaſon is, becauſe the men are then conſidered with regard to the cheſs-board, and in that reſpect they remain in the ſame diſtance; but, if they be conſidered with regard to the chamber or room whence they are moved, they are no longer in the ſame relation of diſtance as to the room, and conſequently not in the ſame place. It is the ſame thing with regard to a man in a boat or coach in progreſſive motion; for, with reſpect to the boat or coach, he may remain in the ſame ſituation, and yet be continually changing place, with regard to the different countries through which the boat or coach proceeds. In this ſenſe the univerſe in general has no place, as it cannot be conſidered with reſpect to diſtance from any other body, there being no exiſtence of any other body. REMARKS.

VIII. *Pag.* 198. We rarely meet with any thing more judicious and more uſeful than what the author obſerves reſpecting *ſimple ideas:* it is, that men, in this particular, do not differ much as to

ſentiment,

REMARKS. ſentiment; but that they differ in the words adopted by each ſect; and to which they are ſeverally attached; which produces a confuſion in diſcourſe; and afterwards in thought.

IX. The author diſcovers on all occaſions a love of truth, which inclines his readers to like the road he purſues for attaining it; he appears always ready to relinquiſh his own opinion, whenever he is made acquainted with others of greater certainty.

ARTICLE II.

The author or the tranſlator have not ſufficiently explained certain thoughts; which has given room to imagine, that either the one or the other, or both, did not fully underſtand what they were about in ſome places, and particularly in pages 52, 150, 712, &c.

XI. The author ſeems to make too frequent repetitions, although this be not always a defect, in abſtracted ſubjects, which are not at firſt readily conceived by the mind; nevertheleſs, when they are repeated, they ſhould, if poſſible, be ſhewn in a new light; which is not always the caſe with Locke.

XII. *Pag.* 1. "*Whatever is, is.*" "This propoſition," ſays the author, "is not univerſally "received, as it does not enter the minds of "children."

Remark.

Remark. Is not this an equivocation? As ſoon as we are capable of reflection, do we not conſider a thing to be that thing, and not another thing? We do not always reflect upon this idea; but it takes place in all our judgements, without our reflecting upon it. The author therefore, on this occaſion, ſeems to have confounded the reflective with the immediate thought: it is however certain, that even children themſelves, more or leſs expreſsly, give their aſſent to this propoſition, *Such a thing is that thing*: and we never can make one of them deny, or doubt inwardly, his foot to be his foot, or his hand to be his hand. REMARKS.

XIII. *Pag.* 14. "It is falſe, to ſay that the uſe "of reaſon diſcovers innate principles."

Remark. Is not this another equivocation on the words *reaſon* and *innate principle?* The author, in fact, is pleaſed, on this occaſion, to call only *uſe of reaſon* the faculty of deducing conſequences; but, according to the opinion of others, that faculty is termed *reaſoning*, or *argumentation*; whereas the faculty of *reaſon* is, to diſcern what common ſenſe dictates to mankind, independently of the conſequences they may thence deduce. With reſpect to the words *innate principle*; if the author thereby means a thought of the mind continually perceived by the ſoul, it is ridiculous

REMARKS. to admit innate principles, as experience tells us that the ſame thought or knowledge is not always preſent to our minds ſo as to be perceptible: but if he calls *innate principle*, what I have denominated *firſt truths*, it is a folly not to acknowledge ſuch. This has been obſerved (No. 41.)

XIV. *Pag.* 38, and the following. The author aſks, *Where is that practical truth which is univerſally received, without any difficulty or objection?*

Remark. This is one, I think: *Do nothing that is culpable in the eyes of the major part of mankind in all ages and all countries of the world.* Locke therefore advances an erroneous maxim, when he ſays that all men do not conſider the duties of fidelity and juſtice as practical principles: all men, it is true, do not agree that certain articles belong to fidelity and juſtice; but all, excepting perhaps a few who are a ſort of monſters in ſociety, lay it down as a principle, that we muſt be faithful and equitable. And there are general points, which all agree to belong to fidelity and juſtice: for example, that *we are obliged, when in our power, to reſtore money, or any other depoſit we have voluntarily taken charge of*; or, that *we ſhould not refuſe the wages promiſed to a man who has ſerved us without giving us any cauſe of diſſatisfaction* This Locke muſt allow, which he ſeems to do, *pag.* 86. where he ſays, *there are certain truths reſulting from*

ſome

ſome particular ideas, which occur, as it were ſponta-neouſly, to the mind, as ſoon as the mind unites thoſe ideas together in order to form propoſitions from them. He ought not therefore to have advanced a propoſition of ſuch a dangerous tendency as this: *Where is that practical truth which is univerſally received without any difficulty?* Theſe maxims, ſays Locke, *pag.* 42, are received becauſe they are uſeful; but it is from the very circumſtance of their utility being naturally felt, that they are univerſally received without difficulty. The examples related by the author, *pag.* 44, of ſeveral enormities perpetrated without any remorſe, are not well authenticated; and, although they had been fully proved, it would only prove that among mankind there are ſome very bad, which is evident. REMARKS.

XV. *Pag.* 147. "Perception is the moſt ſimple idea we receive by the method of reflection."

Remark. Perception carries its idea with itſelf, independently of reflection; or rather it is itſelf an idea, that is called *perception*, inaſmuch as the mind perceives it by what is done before reflection, the latter being nothing at bottom but a ſecond perception, which occurs on account of a firſt perception. The direct *idea* of perception therefore does not ariſe from reflection, but only

REMARKS. the *reflective idea* of perception, which is preceded by the direct perception.

XVI. *Pag.* 200. "The idea of duration pro-
"ceeds from the reflection we make on the ſuc-
"ceſſion of our ideas."

Remark. This argument of Locke does not appear to be very ſolid. *When we ſleep*, ſays he, *and have no ſucceſſion of ideas, we no longer have any idea of duration: the idea of duration therefore proceeds from the ſucceſſion of our ideas.* A man who awakes after a profound ſleep, has no idea of duration in that time.

The author apparently means, that after ſleep we have no idea of the time which paſſed during the ſleep. Now time is the meaſure of duration, and not duration itſelf; the meaſure of the thing, and the thing meaſured, being widely different: and, in fact, the man in queſtion, without knowing how long he exiſted during his ſleep, knows nevertheleſs that he did exiſt; and he has a very clear idea of it, as he is ſenſible that his exiſtence had not been interrupted. (*See the Number of Time and Duration.*)

XVII. *Pag.* 204. "Our thoughts ſucceed one
"another with a determinate degree of celerity;
"ſo that, if the motion be made with more velo-
"city, the ſucceſſion of theſe motions is not per-
"ceptible to our minds. Thus, a cannon-ball
"ſuc-

" ſucceſſively paſſing through the two oppoſite " walls of an apartment, does not ſuffer our " minds to perceive that ſucceſſion; becauſe it " is more rapidly effected than the ſucceſſion of " our thoughts: on the contrary, if the ſucceſſion " be too ſlowly performed, as in the hand of a " clock, we can as little perceive it, becauſe the " ſucceſſive motion of the hand is ſlower than " the ſucceſſion of our thoughts." REMARKS.

Remark. Theſe reflections are ingenious; but, if I be not miſtaken, they have very little ſolidity. The true and ſimple reaſon why we do not perceive and diſcern motions that are too rapid or too ſlow is, that the capacity of our ſenſes is proportioned to a certain meaſure of velocity in motion, as it is to a certain degree of diſtance in extenſion: our ſenſes therefore fail to diſtinguiſh a too rapid or too ſlow motion, as they fail to diſcern objects too remote or too near.

XVIII. *Pag.* 278. " Liberty does not belong " to will or deſire; but only to the power of " thinking or not thinking, and of moving or " not moving."

Remark. Why ſhould not freedom or liberty belong likewiſe to the power of willing or rejecting? The power of moving or not moving is, as it were, no more than an external liberty, and whoſe exerciſe is ſomething external, as the capa-

REMARKS. city of quitting a place or not: but there is an exercise of liberty purely interior; for example, in an event that happens by order of providence, it is in the power of the will to acquiesce therein, or not, to conform to, or oppose it. This is an exercise of liberty purely internal, which Locke seems not to know, and which should be known.

XIX. *Pag.* 282. The author likewise perplexes himself by attempting to prove, that *the will should not be termed free*, because, according to the manner of conceiving, will is one power, and liberty another; so that both are but one modification, and the modification falls only on one agent, and not on another modification. All this, I say, contains no more than nominal questions: it is true, that every modification is the modification of a being or agent: but this does not prevent a modification from being the same as another modification; that is, from being a particular circumstance of that modification: for example, motion is the modification of a ball, and its direction towards the east or west is a modification of the motion of the ball. It is therefore useless to enquire whether it is the will that should be called *free*, provided that we know that it is the man who wills, and is free. And inasmuch as he *wills* simply, it is a simple modification; but his freely *willing* or *desiring* is a modification modified: when

when he freely wills or deſires, ſo that what he wills may be executed by an external motion, it is a modification modified by a ſecond modification, which is again modified by a third modification. REMARKS.

XX. *Pag.* 294. "It is not the greateſt advan-"tage or good that determines the action of the "will, but ſome actual uneaſineſs that is moſt "preſſing."

Remark. This uneaſineſs leaves to the will the power of either acting, or not acting, or it does not leave it ſuch power: if it does leave it that power, it does not determine the will, as Locke pretends: if it does not leave it that power, free-will is deſtroyed by the uneaſineſs. This part is full of perplexing difficulties, in which we can diſcern nothing but errors and dangers.

XXI. *Pag.* 366. "Minds are capable of mo-"tion; and the ſoul changes its place when the "body moves from one place to another, as the "ſoul cannot act where it is not.

Remark. This is another verbal difficulty. If the author means, by *motion*, a modification ſimilar to that we call motion in bodies, it is by no means true that the ſoul is capable of motion, as a ſpiritual being is not capable of a corporeal modification: if he implies, by *motion*, either the thought or will of man, or the motion which hap-

REMARKS. pens in the body through the thought and will of the ſoul, in that ſenſe the ſoul is capable of motion. To know whether it changes its place, is another nominal queſtion: it is certain that the ſoul does not act, but where the body is, to which it is united: if people mean to call place, or change of place, the place where it makes an impreſſion on the body, and to which the body is moved, the ſoul has a place.

XXII. *Pag.* 396. What the author ſays relative to identity, appears very ſtrange: for example, that *a man who ſhould totally loſe his memory would no longer be the ſame perſon, but that he would nevertheleſs be the ſame man.* The identity of the man, according to him, conſiſts only in a ſimple ſucceſſion of parts vitally united to the ſame organiſed body. This is ſaying that the man is the ſame, in the very part which makes him no longer the ſame; for whoſoever ſays *ſucceſſion*, expreſſes a change or ceſſation of identity; or, to ſpeak more clearly, and without any circumlocution, it is ſaying that the man being capable only of analogical identity, what cannot properly be termed identity, is nothing but what is corporeal. Beſides, the author, in fact, ſays, *to the ſame body*. What can be his meaning, I really know not. The body is nothing elſe, really and ſubſtantially, but parts that ſucceed one another: to ſay therefore that thoſe

thoſe parts are united to the ſame body, is ſaying that the ſame body is united with the ſame body, or with itſelf. In fine, to ſay that thoſe parts are united vitally to the ſame organiſed body, is a third difficulty, as perplexing as the two firſt; for what is it *to be united vitally to the ſame body?* Is it not as difficult to unravel, as identity itſelf? According to this, a man who has loſt all remembrance of what he had done while he was intoxicated with liquor, is no longer the ſame perſon he was when intoxicated; and if he ſhould be puniſhed for what he had done in that ſituation, it is, our author ſays, becauſe the laws cannot abſolutely diſtinguiſh at what preciſe time he ceaſed to be the ſame perſon. By this rule, there is not a man in the world that is the ſame perſon he was in the womb of his mother. I cannot imagine how ſo great a man as Locke could have been capable of uttering ſuch deſpicable trifles, the bare repetition of which is an ample refutation: he ſeems himſelf to treat them as extravagant notions; and, with equal truth, he might call them pernicious *opinions*, with reſpect to all ſound principles of religion, morality, and common ſenſe. REMARKS.

XXIII. *Pag.* 442. "The cauſe of the obſcurity of our ideas ariſes from the imperfection of our organs, or, &c."

Re-

REMARKS. *Remark.* Locke ſeems, on this occaſion, to contradict himſelf, as he obſerves, towards the latter end of the ſame page, that an idea *is not confuſed*, but with reſpect to words; then it is not confuſed in itſelf, nor is its confuſion produced by the organs. The fact is, he perceived that what had been generally ſaid with regard to the obſcurity and confuſion of ideas, was very confuſed, and very obſcure; and therefore endeavoured to elucidate the ſubject, but without ſucceſs. I am apt to think, he fain would have ſaid what has been taken notice of by me on another occaſion: as he hath obſerved (page 446) that the confuſion of an idea *always relates to two ideas*, he might have added, *two ideas with regard to which a tacit judgement occurs*; for, without this tacit judgement, one idea, or two ideas, being always clearly preſent to the mind of themſelves, would never produce any confuſion therein.

XXIV. *Pag.* 458. "All our ſimple ideas are "complete, becauſe they cannot but be con- "formable to the powers God has placed in men "to produce ſuch ſenſation in us.

Remark. Either the author, on this occaſion, conſiders the idea ſuch as it is, in itſelf, in our minds, or elſe with reſpect to external objects: every idea in itſelf is complete, as being perfectly in our minds what it actually is there; but,

but, with regard to external objects, the moſt accurate ideas are never complete, becauſe they never repreſent to us, with perfect preciſion, all the particulars of an object diſtinct from us. (N°. 201, and 212.) REMARKS.

XXV. *Pag.* 484, *and the following.* "The au-
" thor ſpeaks of the extravagant combination of
" certain ideas, or of the bad effects which it
" produces."

Remark. Amongſt the ingenious and juſt obſervations he has made on this occaſion, he has omitted two obſervations which I think are eſſential. The firſt is, that this combination of ideas would produce no injurious effect, if it did not form a tacit judgement. Secondly, this aſſociation of ideas is never defective, unleſs with regard to an object exiſting diſtinct from our minds, which is not, in itſelf, ſuch as our minds repreſent it; and this would produce no bad conſequence, if no judgement intervened.

XXVI. *Pag.* 318. "A figure terminating a
" ſpace by three lines is the eſſence of a triangle
" both real and nominal."

Remark. Locke had not yet diveſted himſelf of general prejudice on this occaſion, nor was he ſufficiently attentive to preſerve conſiſtency in his ideas. He had previouſly aſſerted, that nominal

REMARKS. minal eſſence is *an abſtraction of the mind affixed to a name:* he declared in another place, that *nothing really ſubſiſts but in a particular manner*; that is, excluded from a ſtate of abſtraction, (pag. 516, 517, and elſewhere.) There is therefore no eſſence that is, at the ſame time, both *nominal* and *real*; for real eſſence is the ſtate of the thing excluded from abſtraction, and nominal eſſence, the ſtate of the thing taken abſtractedly: and indeed nominal, ideal, or abſtracted eſſence, may be applied to many particular beings; whereas real eſſence is only applicable to one particular being, as real eſſence includes the different qualities peculiar to each thing, of which it is the eſſence.

XXVII. *Pag.* 330. "We can take nothing "from the idea of white, and the idea of red, "ſo as to make them concur in any common "reſemblance; whereas the ideas of man and "brute concur in the idea of animal."

Remark. The idea of colour is no leſs common, and is as properly applicable both to *white* and *red*, as the idea of animal is both to man and brute. We cannot therefore diſcover what the author meant on this occaſion.

Pag. 617. "The precepts of the law of Na- "ture

" ture are clear, and have been rarely contro- REMARKS.
" verted."

Remark. This is very true, if it be underſtood of the precepts preſcribed by the firſt principles of the law of Nature: but it does not fully correſpond with what the author has ſaid (page 38), when he aſked, *Where is that practical virtue which is generally received?*

XXVIII. *Pag.* 642. " The whole art of Rhe-
" toric, from the frequent uſe of figurative ex-
" preſſions, ſerves only to inſinuate falſe ideas.
" Mankind in general ſhew little attention to
" the advancement of truth, in appropriating
" the moſt flattering rewards of literature to ſuch
" ſeductive arts."

Remark. The invective here thrown out is not perhaps unjuſt, but it appears exaggerated. Eloquence makes uſe of figurative words and ſentences, in order to inſinuate the ideas it would impreſs, in a more forcible and ſtriking manner, which is an advantage: it is an abuſe of eloquence to uſe it for the purpoſe of inſinuating falſe ideas; but the improper uſe made of an art by individuals does not leſſen its value. Orators are juſtly rewarded, becauſe it is preſumed that they ſpeak on the ſide of truth, and that nothing is more eſtimable than the capacity of diſplaying truth in all its beauty. Many philoſophers are held

REMARKS. held in little eſteem for want of that talent: truth is as it were buried in their minds, and they are incapable of bringing it to light.

XXIX. *Pag.* 666. "The congruity or in-"congruity of our ideas conſiſts, 1ſt, In their "identity; 2dly, In their relation; 3dly, In "their connexion; 4thly, In their real co-exiſt-"ence."

Remark. If Locke had entirely analyſed his ſubject, I believe he would have found that every relation is at bottom a ſpecific identity of ideas; and, in taking away that identity, we take away all relation. The author moreover ſeems on ſome occaſions to confound the ſimple connexion of ideas with their real co-exiſtence. (pag. 667, pag. 69, and pag. 691, 9, and 10.)

XXX. *Pag.* 683. "Our knowledge is not "always clear, though our ideas are."

Remark. This part of Locke is not explained, although it is worthy of inveſtigation: the fault may perhaps be owing to the Tranſlator. The Author, as far as I can conjecture, means, that with clear ideas of an object, we have not however a knowledge of its real exiſtence diſtinct from our minds, which is true; but it is not true, that the knowledge may not be clear when the

the ideas which make it the ſubject of them are themſelves clear. REMARKS.

XXXI. *Pag.* 710, *and* 712. "We cannot "find the connexion between the ideas we have."

Remark. The author ſeems to confound the conformity between one idea and another, and the conformity between an idea and an object diſtinct from us.

XXXII. *Pag.* 720. "Exiſtence is not re- "quired for real knowledge: thus mathemati- "cal truths ſubſiſt independently of the exiſtence "of things."

Remark. If Locke ſpeaks conſequentially in admitting a *real* knowledge, and a knowledge *that is not real*, he ſhould have adduced a clear diſtinction between both: this he has not done. For my own part, I call *real* or *external* knowledge, the congruity of our idea with the exiſtence of things ſubſiſting diſtinct from us; and *ideal* or *internal* knowledge, the congruity between one idea and another, independently of the exiſtence of things: this is intelligible, and diſtinguiſhes what our author and many others have generally confounded. He admits however, for a *real truth*, a conformity of our ideas with things; but what things? As he ſuppoſes them indepen-

dent

REMARKS. dent of exiſtence, they can be no other than ideas.

Pag. 836. "In the teſtimonies traditionally known." (See N°. 177. and the next.)

On the Metaphyſics of MALBRANCHE, *in his* ENQUIRY INTO TRUTH. Printed at Paris, in 1712.

ARTICLE I.

THE reputation of this writer, in the philoſophical world, is ſo well known, that it ſeems unneceſſary to point out in what he has been moſt conſpicuous among philoſophers. At firſt he was no more than a mere Carteſian; but he threw ſuch a brilliant profuſion of light round the doctrine of Des Cartes, that it was more univerſally ſpread by the lively flights of imagination and elegant diction of the diſciple, than by all the arguments and various invented ſyſtems of the maſter.

Father Malbranche did not confine himſelf ſimply to the opinions of Des Cartes; while he did more than ample juſtice to their merit, he, with

with equal ſucceſs, diffuſed his own particular notions. REMAKKS.

The greateſt merit of Malbranche conſiſted in his addreſs in deducing from an opinion every conſequence, either intereſting or ſpecious, that imagination could poſſibly ſuggeſt, and in giving a profile view of the principles, in ſuch a manner, that, on the ſide he leaves them open, it is impoſſible not to admit their propriety, at leaſt ſo long as we keep our eyes fixed on that ſide only. We follow him with pleaſure in the immenſe courſe of his ideas, which entertain and flatter curioſity, whilſt they enliven and faſcinate ſtill more powerfully the mind of whoever is ſatisfied with contemplating objects, on that ſide alone on which they are diſplayed by Malbranche.

Thoſe who do not admit the ideas of this philoſopher, will have it, that, to eſcape their contagious influence at once, we have only to ſtop him at ſetting out, and oppoſe the firſt propoſition he advances; that this is the ſafeſt and ſhorteſt method of refuting him, and of diſcovering clearly what we are to judge of his principles: they are chiefly confined to five or ſix, againſt which we muſt carefully be on our guard; for, if we once allow them, we ſhall be under the neceſſity of following him much further than we deſigned.

REMARKS. The method he takes to inſinuate his principles, is in reality calculated to deceive only thoſe who are willing to be deceived. He fully diſplays the objections to which the opinion he refutes is liable; and whilſt he endeavours to inſpire us with contempt for it, he artfully exhibits his own in the moſt ſpecious point of view; then, without further ceremony, he ſuppoſes it inconteſtable on all future occaſions, never conſidering, nor pretending to conſider, any objections that may, or ſhould be made to it. In examining the ſubjects to which my plan naturally led me, as I have mentioned them more than once, it will be ſufficient here to ſet down the moſt general principles of Malbranche, in order to refer the Reader to thoſe parts of my work, wherein I have endeavoured to explain them. The following, in particular, are ſome of thoſe principles.

I. *Vol I. Book I. Chap. X.* "The nature of "the ſoul conſiſts in actual thought."

Obſervation. I have ſhewn, in Part III. Chap. VI. the little proof we have that the ſoul always thinks.

II. *Book III. Part II. Chap. I.* "He defines "ideas, the immediate objects of the mind, "which repreſent things to it in ſo clear a man-

"ner,

"ner, that we can diſcover at one view whether REMARKS.
"ſuch particular modifications belong to them."

Obſerv. I have related in a concife manner (Part III. Chap. VIII.) what can be ſaid intelligible with reſpect to ideas; and in another work *(Principles of Reaſon)* I have explained what we are to underſtand by the object of an idea. Malbranche and his diſciples were deceived by confounding the ſimple internal object of their ideas with the external object, as they are pleaſed to repreſent it, and which is by no means, in itſelf, what our ideas repreſent it; becauſe we are unacquainted with the internal nature of things.

III. *Vol. I. Book III. Chap. II.* "Ideas are be-
"ings more real than all that we ſee in the uni-
"verſe."

Obſerv. Ideas certainly have no more than an ideal reality; and thoſe who do not immediately perceive what reaſon ſhould judge of ſuch realities, will not be convinced by all the reaſoning in the world. The argument on which Malbranche founds his opinion is curious: Ideas, ſays he, are intelligible; they are not therefore non-entities, and conſequently they are real beings. In like manner I may ſay, that motion, mobility, roundneſs, and every other modification imaginable, whether of minds or of bodies,

REMARKS. are intelligible, and therefore that roundneſs is a real being.

IV. *Vol. I. Book III. Part II. Chap. IV.* "Our "minds have an infinite number of ideas."

Obſerv. What does experience ſay? If our minds had an infinity of ideas, they would know an infinite number of objects. For my own part, I cannot ſay I find myſelf poſſeſſed of this happy extent of infinite knowledge. Were we even to conſider chimerical ideas as true knowledge, their number would ſtill be limited, and not infinite.

V. *Vol. I. Book III. p.* 2, 6, 7. "We cannot "have a knowledge of the nature, eſſence, and "modifications of a thing, but by a clear idea "of the thing itſelf."

Obſerv. The Reader will find, in Chap. II. III. IV. and V. of the Second Part of this work, every neceſſary information for forming preciſe and proper ideas with regard to the eſſence of things: but if he wiſhes to avoid the trouble of ſeeking a refutation of Malbranche any where elſe but from himſelf, he need but conſider that part of his Enquiry into Truth, *(Vol. II. Eclairciſſement II.)* where he ſays, that *we have no clear idea either of the nature or the modifications of our ſouls.* If he has no ſuch idea, how has he then declared, according to our firſt obſervation, that

the

the nature of the ſoul conſiſts in its actual thought? The contradiction is ſo glaring and obvious, that one muſt be either blind, or an enthuſiaſtic follower of Malbranche, not to be ſtruck with it. REMARKS.

VI. *Vol. II. Book VI. Chap. I.* "Second cauſes "are inefficacious: it is a contradiction, to ſay "that God gives them any power, or conſtitutes "them cauſes of any phyſical reality."

Obſerv. In Chap. XVII. and XVIII. of the Second Part of this treatiſe, in ſpeaking of the ideas of *acting* and *action*, I have explained the queſtion of occaſional cauſes, in a manner which ſhews plainly that men have talked of acting and action without ever having any preciſe idea of either; and therefore the opinion of Malbranche concerns a firſt truth, where his proofs exactly form the ſtate of the queſtion; but by attacking him with his own words, he may be ſtill more forcibly refuted. How, in fact, can he aſſert that a ſecond cauſe, ſuch as the human ſoul, has not the power of producing an act, if he acknowledges, on the other hand, that he has *no idea of the nature or modifications of the ſoul?* When he has learned to be conſiſtent, we ſhall examine his ideas with cloſer attention.

VII. *Vol. I. Book III. Chap. II.* "The human "mind has a very diſtinct idea of infinity."

REMARKS. *Obſerv.* The equivocation that has puzzled ſo many on the ſubject of infinity, is clearly explained in Chap. XII. of the ſecond part of this treatiſe.

VIII. *Vol. I. Book III. Part II.* "We ſee all "things in God".

Obſerv. The many difficulties that have been ſtarted about this opinion, and the conſequences thence deduced, are known to every body; but it appears to me, that the moſt natural reflection to be formed of the matter is, that we are as much perplexed to conceive in what manner we ſee God, and the things in God, as to comprehend how we ſee and know all other objects. Experience convinces of the fact; and the *manner* is incomprehenſible.

IX. *Vol. I. Book III. Part I.* "Matter conſiſts "in extenſion."

Obſerv. This point has been diſcuſſed in Chapter I. of the Fourth Part of this treatiſe.

Theſe difficulties, and others of a ſimilar nature, are fully explained in a work that has for title, *Refutation of a Metaphyſical Treatiſe:* it is printed in three volumes, by the Widow Maziere.

On the Metaphyſical Work of LE CLERC.

THIS work may be known by the remarks made in different parts of my treatiſe. Le Clerc only copied the thoughts of Locke, at leaſt in the greater part of his work. His deſign was laudable, in giving a compendium of a voluminous treatiſe, which contained many juſt and new reflections, with ſome others that were erroneous, and might be productive of very dangerous conſequences.

Le Clerc, however, did not borrow from Locke his error with reſpect to the fancied prerogative of the ſight over the organ of hearing, taken notice of Chap. XV. Part I. of this work.

It were be to wiſhed that he had not followed Locke in his obſcurities, and in thoſe reflections which are as remote from the common ſentiment of mankind, as from the principles of morality.

Other obſervations on this Writer may be found in the Remarks upon Locke,

REMARKS.

On the Logic of CROUZAS, *Profeſſor of Mathematics at* LAUSANNE. Printed at Amſterdam in 1712, 2 *vol.* 12*mo.*

ARTICLE I.

THE deſign of Crouzas was extenſive: he propoſed to include in his work the *principles, maxims, and obſervations, that might contribute to give the mind more capacity, ſtrength, and facility, for the perception, diſcovery, and communication of truth,* &c. This deſign, which is rather conſiderable for a mere Logician, treats of the moſt important ſubjects of metaphyſical reſearches; and hence we thought it worthy of examination.

II. He propoſed to collect what had been moſt materially obſerved of the various operations of the human mind, by the different philoſophers, who had attempted to inveſtigate the ſubject: there is ſcarce any work of the kind, but that of Locke, to which he does not ſeem to have paid all the attention that was neceſſary.

III. He has made various new reflections, which would be highly valuable, had they been fully explained. An example of this may be

ſeen

ſeen in *Chap.* 1. *Section* 3. *Part* 1. where he ſpeaks of *clear* and *obſcure*, *diſtinct* and *confuſed ideas*. He there plainly intimates, that at bottom there is no idea, conſidered in itſelf, which can be obſcure; and that thoſe commonly termed *obſcure*, are no ideas, or but the ideas of a word under which no idea is conceived. He thus explains himſelf: We repreſent to ourſelves a particular object under an idea vague, and not very diſtinct; and this is what is generally called an obſcure idea, becauſe it gives but an obſcure knowledge of the object which we at the moment pretend to repreſent to ourſelves. There is nevertheleſs no obſcurity in the idea conſidered as to itſelf; for, however vague it may be ſuppoſed, it is not the leſs preſent to the mind, and conſequently it is clear and not obſcure in the mind: it is not a complete and diſtinct idea of the object we would fain repreſent to ourſelves; but it is a complete and diſtinct idea of what is actually repreſented in the mind, ſo as to be totally diſtinguiſhed from every other idea in the mind. Beſides, as what is not actually in the mind, can be no idea, it cannot therefore be an obſcure idea. REMARKS.

From this truth, here pointed out by Crouzas, a thouſand diſcoveries might be deduced, to aſcertain the true nature of ideas, in a more ſatisfactory manner than has been hitherto known.

IV.

REMARKS. IV. Many other parts of this work furniſh reflections equally acute and judicious.

ARTICLE II.

V. But there are various reflections ſcattered through the work, which are not ſufficiently explained. Beſides, the ſubjects do not appear fully connected with the preceding matter, nor ſufficiently ſupported with what immediately follows, ſo as to form a whole, whoſe parts are mutually dependent on each other.

VI. The neglect of elocution in ſome places is likewiſe an imperfection, that leſſens the great perſpicuity which is neceſſary, in abſtracted matters, in order to make them clearly underſtood by thoſe to whom they are explained.

VII. Although the knowledge and diſcovery of truth, on which the author pretends to ground his work, ſhould be preceded by an exact notion of the word *truth*; he does not, however, diſtinguiſh the equivocation of which the term is ſuſceptible. On other occaſions of a ſimilar nature, he ſuppoſes, as clear, terms that are full of ambiguity; ſo that he advances for inconteſtable, what would afford the faireſt ſubject of controverſy; and for true principles, the mere ſtate of the queſtions. The firſt chapter, on the perceptions of the mind, furniſhes examples to ſhew the true nature and ſpirit of the work.

VIII.

VIII. *Pag.* 8. "There are ſome perceptions "which are known and felt ſimply by themſelves: there are others which, at the ſame time "that they are felt, help to make known to us "ſomething different from ourſelves. Grief and "deſire belong to the firſt kind; the thought of "a tree, and of a circle, are of the ſecond ſpecies. "The firſt are called ſenſations, and have themſelves only for the object: the others have a different object from themſelves; to theſe I give "the name of ideas. REMARKS.

Obſerv. There are perceptions that are known of themſelves. There is a perplexity in theſe words: perception does not properly know itſelf; it is but the action of the mind which knows, and it is the knowledge itſelf of the mind. Knowledge therefore does not know itſelf, no more than action can be properly ſaid to act; it is the faculty of the ſoul called mind, which knows and acts: we cannot ſay it is *viſion* ſees, but the eye ſees.

Again the author, by dividing the thoughts of the mind into *thoſe that ſimply know themſelves, and ſuch as make known to us ſomething different from ourſelves*, ſuppoſes of courſe that we have thoughts that, independently of external objects, from which we receive impreſſions, make known to us things different from ourſelves. This however appears falſe, or at leaſt doubtful. It is leſs our minds that make known an object diſtinct from

us,

REMARKS. us, than the object itſelf diſtinct from us, which makes itſelf known to us through the channel of our ſenſes. A man born blind has no knowledge of colours, becauſe they have not firſt made themſelves known to his mind. It is the ſame thing with reſpect to other ſenſible objects. The knowledge we have of them does not proceed from the nature of our thoughts themſelves, but from the impreſſion of external objects on our ſouls, by ſenſations.

IX. *Pag.* 8. "Our ſenſations conſtitute our "immediate happineſs and miſery.

Obſerv. The author defines ſenſation, *a perception which is ſimply felt of itſelf, without making known any extraneous object.* But, if this perception be not accompanied either by pleaſure or diſpleaſure, as would be the caſe of a reflection on the thought of a triangle, how ſhould thought contribute to our happineſs or miſery? The object of this reflection would be ſimply in us; and conſequently, according to the author's definition, it muſt be a *ſenſation*, and not an idea. Are we then happy or miſerable by reflecting on the thought of a triangle? No, ſurely; unleſs, in the reflection on the thought of a triangle, ſome kind of pleaſure or diſpleaſure ſhould occur. The author therefore, on this occaſion, might have more clearly explained his opinion, or altered it entirely. What follows occaſions new difficulties,

ties, by expreſſions which ſeem to mean ſome- REMARKS.
thing, but in fact ſay nothing. (11)

X. *Pag.* 8. *As it is not in our power to excite and repreſs thoſe ſenſations, it is neceſſary, on that account, to borrow the aſſiſtance of objects.* What objects does the author mean? Are they external or internal objects? To what internal or external object muſt we have recourſe, in order to reſtrain the ſenſation of a violent affliction which we are not able to conquer? Again, in what does this recourſe *to objects* conſiſt? What methods are to be uſed in order to accompliſh it with efficacy? The more we endeavour to come at the author's meaning, the more it eludes our reſearches.

XI. *Pag.* 8. "The human mind draws its "ideas, as it were, from its own ſtock."

Obſerv. As the author here contraſts *ideas* with *ſenſations*, he muſt mean, that, from our own ſtock, we rather derive what he calls ideas, than what he terms ſenſations; the idea of a circle, rather than a ſentiment of deſire: in which he appears to be miſtaken, as a man may paſs the firſt part of life without having any idea of a circle; but he is never without ſentiment, or, to uſe the author's expreſſions, without the ſenſation of deſire.

XII.

REMARKS.

XII. *Pag.* 8. "Man, as he likes, paſſes from "one idea to another."

Obſerv. The author does not expreſs himſelf juſtly here; for, by diſtinguiſhing *ideas* from *ſenſations*, as he has done, he attributes to ideas, in particular, what is no more applicable to them than to ſenſations. A mind occupied with the deſire of being revenged on an enemy, can no more abandon the idea of the enemy, than the ſenſation of revenge. Every word the author has advanced on this occaſion is full of perplexity or doubt: it is the ſame with what follows.

XIII. *Pag.* 8. "It was neceſſary it ſhould be "ſo; for, as the wiſdom of man depends upon "his ideas, it was fitting we ſhould have it in "our power to improve ourſelves in knowledge "and virtue."

Obſerv. Whence has the author diſcovered that the wiſdom of man depends rather on what he calls *ideas*, than on what he terms *ſenſation*? Are there not numberleſs ideas of no manner of uſe to true wiſdom, which conſiſts in ſeeking and acquiring real happineſs? On the other hand, the ſenſations he mentions, ſuch as thirſt, hunger, pain, ſorrow, and deſire, are all intereſting to our happineſs; ſo that it would be of much more important advantage to our wiſdom and happineſs, that we were maſters of our ſenſations than of our ideas,

ideas, ſuppoſing we could have ſenſations without ideas, as Crouzas pretends, by oppoſing ſenſations to ideas. REMARKS.

XIV. *Pag.* 8. " This is the reaſon why words " produce ideas, and not ſenſations."

Obſerv. Theſe words follow the preceding quotation from the author, in immediate ſucceſſion, although we cannnot perceive the connection or conſequence of either the one, or the other; nor do we more clearly diſcern the meaning of what follows next.

XV. " But although a word ſerves to indicate " a certain ſenſation, we in vain pronounce it; " the ſound of the word does not give the ſoul " the power of producing a ſenſation that depends " on external objects, and which it has pleaſed " the Author of Nature to affix to their impreſ- " ſions."

Obſerv. Does a word rather give power to the ſoul to produce an idea, than power to produce a ſenſation? When we ſay that a word produces ideas, it is ſaying that words, which are the ſigns of objects, occaſion the ſoul to recollect the idea of thoſe objects. Now, in this ſenſe, a word produces a ſenſation, as well as an idea, as it occaſions the ſoul to perceive a ſenſation, as well as an idea.

XVI.

REMARKS.

XVI. *Pag.* 9. *A ſenſation depends upon objects.* The author has ſaid, in the preceding page, that ſenſations have themſelves alone for objects. How are all thoſe objects to be conceived and explained?

Pag. 9. "When we are at a loſs to expreſs "our thoughts, and cannot clearly convey "them, there is ſome probability that we have "confined ourſelves to ſenſations, inſtead of "ideas."

Obſerv. What does he mean by ſaying, *we confine ourſelves to ſenſations inſtead of ideas?* Is this intelligible? Beſides, when we cannot ſucceed in expreſſing our thoughts, this does not ariſe more from ſenſations than ideas; we may be as much puzzled to expreſs ideas as ſenſations; and this difficulty is only occaſioned by two cauſes; either from our ignorance of the language in which we attempt to explain ourſelves, or from the ſterility of the language itſelf, which does not furniſh expreſſions ſufficient to communicate what we have in our minds. This is clear, and more eaſily underſtood than ſaying, it is becauſe *we have confined ourſelves to ſenſations, inſtead of ideas.*

XVII. *Pag.* 11. "When we think, as the ob-"jects act upon the organs of our body, the "ideas

" ideas that excite it, immediately belong to the " faculty of the ſenſes." REMARKS.

Obſerv. What is the reaſon the author here calls the ſenſes the organs of the body? The body is its own organ: the ſenſes are the organs of the ſoul, as being the inſtruments by whoſe aſſiſtance the ſoul perceives the objects diſtinct from herſelf. The remainder of the laſt-quoted paſſage is ſo unintelligible, that it is better to aſcribe the ambiguity to the errors of the preſs, than to the author's expreſſions.

Our imagination, in order to ſatisfy the deſire we have of knowing the nature of thought, preſents us with the idea of a certain kind of fire, &c. I know not what ſort of imagination repreſents thought as a fire. We indeed ſometimes compare it metaphorically to fire; and this has given riſe to thoſe expreſſions, *fire of imagination,* or *thoughts full of fire:* but I cannot thence perſuade myſelf that a thought may be repreſented as a fire.

XVIII. *Pag.* 13. " Numbers are very diſtinctly " known."

Obſerv. The propoſition taken in a general ſenſe, as it is here ſet forth, is very falſe: numbers multiplied to a great degree, ſuch as millions of myriads, are not diſtinctly known but in the ſame manner as geometrical demonſtrations; that is, a mind that ſtudies to know them one after ano-

REMARKS. ther, and that is capable of fully retaining their relation, will know them very diſtinctly. But what does this idea of numbers imply, that is not common to all other ideas?

XIX. The author adds, "that the images "with which imagination accompanies thoſe "ideas, are not uniform; the Latins, Greeks, "and Hebrews, when they think of a hundred, "think of the ſame number; but their images are "different, as C. and 100."

Obſerv. The author, on this occaſion, appears to confound written characters, which are nothing but arbitrary ſigns formed differently, according to the fancy of various nations, for the purpoſe of repreſenting numbers, with the natural images of the idea of numbers.

XX. *Pag.* 14. "We ſhould do all in our "power to baniſh the idea of body, and en- "deavour to think as we ſhould if there were no "body."

Obſerv. How ſhould I think, if there were no body? This I ſhould firſt learn, before I was exhorted to think as if there had been none; but it is what I ſhall never be able to learn, becauſe we have no thought, nor knowledge, but by the uſe of the ſenſes, which form a part of the body. There

REMARKS.

Theſe reflections, which are beyond the natural reach of our underſtanding, are the foundation of the maxims of certain philoſophers, whom people ſometimes fancy they underſtand, and who flatter themſelves that they are underſtood: but their opinion is not the real matter of fact.

On the Logic of REGIS, *with reſpect to Metaphyſical Principles.*

[*This work, as the Author hints, having been formed on the plan of others, which have been taken notice of, we ſhall paſs over ſuch parts as might expoſe us to the neceſſity of repetitions.*]

ARTICLE I.

THE method of Regis is praiſe-worthy: he has endeavoured to give precepts independently of ſuppoſitions. As theſe are generally in ſome degree arbitrary, they conſequently form only deſtructive principles.

II. He juſtly obſerves in what manner all ideas might be reduced under more proper heads than the ten Categories of Ariſtotle.

III. On the chapter of Univerſal Ideas he very properly expoſes the inutility of diffuſive queſtions, which are ſometimes treated on this ſubject;

REMARKS. ject: he compriſes what can be rationally ſaid of the matter, within the compaſs of three pages; and it might, if neceſſary, be reduced to three words, as follows: Among ideas more or leſs common, ſubordinate to each other, that which is moſt common is called *genus*, with reſpect to what is leſs ſo, which is denominated *ſpecies*, or *kind*; that the latter is alſo termed *immediate ſpecies* or *kind*, when it no longer has any common idea, but only particular ideas ſubordinate to it.

IV. He judiciouſly obſerves, that every negative propoſition ſhould be reduced to a poſitive idea, without which there could be no connexion between two propoſitions, one whereof ſhould be negative. This I have taken notice of on another occaſion; and it is the principle by which all ſyllogiſms are reduced under one rule.

ARTICLE II.

V. This work is rather too conciſe: the author's ideas are not ſufficiently explained.

VI. *Preface.* The author ſays, that *he has made no diſcoveries in Logic, becauſe it is confined within certain limits which cannot be paſſed.* This concluſion is not juſt: diſcoveries may be made within the bounds of Logic, and there were diſcoveries to be made at the time he wrote.

VII. The plan the author ſets out upon, of not reaſoning on ſuppoſitions, he directly contradicts

REMARKS.

tradicts by the following aſſertion: *The ſoul has, at moſt, only the power of determining the motions of the body; and experience ſhows that they do not proceed from it.* This, I ſay, is a ſuppoſition; and I do not know but the ſuppoſition is in itſelf contradictory; for, if the ſoul has the power of determining the motions of the body, by that very rule it has the power of acting upon the body. Vide Chap. XVIII. Part II. of this Treatiſe.

VIII. *Pag.* 111. "It is likewiſe an ill-founded "and dangerous ſuppoſition, to include the idea "of extenſion in the liſt of ideas of ſubſtance." (Vide the latter end of Chap. I. Part IV.) Our Author ſeems confuſed when he afterwards ſays, that *ſquare or triangular figures are modes of extenſion, becauſe they cannot exiſt without extenſion.* We may, with equal reaſon, tell him that extenſion is a mode of body, becauſe it cannot exiſt ſeparate from an extended body.

IX. *Pag.* 8. "The arbitrary idea of a triangle "repreſents all triangles."

Remark. The reflection is not juſt: the arbitrary idea indeed repreſents what is common to all triangles; but every triangle has, in particular, real diſtinctions, which cannot be repreſented by an arbitrary and general idea.

X.

REMARKS.

X. "If," ſays the Author, "I apply myſelf "to conſider that extenſion exiſts in itſelf, the "idea I form will repreſent therein, not only the "body, but alſo the mind." This propoſition, and the conſequence which the Author ſeems inclined to deduce from it, are ſo ſtrange, that it is ſufficient to repeat them, without there being any neceſſity for analyſing their dangerous abſurdities.

XI. *Pag.* 4. The Author defines *method* in theſe terms—*The art of properly directing reaſon in the purſuit of truth.* But, in giving *method* for a part of logic, how can he ſuppoſe a part of Logic to have the ſame function as the totality of Logic itſelf, the end of which is to direct Reaſon in her reſearches after truth? It would have been proper to have diſtinguiſhed in what, and how, a part differs from the whole, and the whole from a part.

THE END.

00059637

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 15 June, 2016